THE MAKING OF MODERN ENGLAND

BY

GILBERT SLATER

A lucid and authoritative account of the economic, industrial and social forces that shaped the development of England during the nineteenth century. Special emphasis is given to a discussion of the relations of industrial conditions to tariff legislation, to the history of the labor movement, and to the movement for woman suffrage, and the causes of the present social and political unrest in England — one of the most momentous phenomena of current history — are made clear.

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GILBERT SLATER

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THE MAKING OF MODERN ENGLAND

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BY

GILBERT SLATER, M.A., D.Sc.

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PREFACE

My aim in this book is to set out in language as simple and clear as I can command those facts with regard to the recent history of our country which it is most important for English men and women to know. History may be studied, like any other science, under the influence of a noble curiosity, with no end beyond the attainment of clearer knowledge of the past; but such study is either recreation for hours of leisure, or the task of the specialist historian. For the citizen, historical study with the ulterior object of gaining light in the future and guidance in the present, is an imperative duty; and my desire is to help the growing numbers who feel this. For this reason I have not hesitated in places to express my own opinions on certain controverted questions. I do not entertain either the hope or the wish that any reader should adopt the opinions I express without due examination, though in some cases, I may, for the sake of clearness and brevity, have put them too dogmatically. The claim I make is that the raising of party conflict round any question of economics or politics must not be allowed to exclude that question from the field of scientific research; but that, on the other hand, the fiercer the conflict, the more necessary it is for the ordinary citizen to endeavour to bring to his judgment of the issue the same freedom from bias and loyalty to truth with which the historian studies the bases of the social order of Athens, or the wars of the Egyptian kings.

All this is not easy. To paint truly on the canvas a wide-spread landscape, as it is at any moment, is to accomplish a triumph of delicate art. To depict in a small book

the main features of the life of a great nation during a crowded century, is a task so much more difficult that he who attempts it must be content with the most modest degree of success. I should have liked to lavish much more time and labour on this effort if it had been possible. As it is, I must now present it, for what it is worth, to those who are seeking for light from the past on the difficulties and dangers of this most critical moment in the life of our nation, of the empire, and of humanity.

GILBERT SLATER.

Ruskin College, Oxford,
September 1912.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF CAVOUR

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THE MAKING OF MODERN ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

THE PEACE WITHOUT A PARALLEL

From War to Peace

There are but few turning-points in history at which there is so marked a break in the current of the life of nations as there was for Europe and for England when, in November 1815, the peace was concluded which finally ended the Napoleonic wars. I would say, somewhat forcing the literal meaning of the word, that for our own country the eighteenth century ended in 1815, and the nineteenth began with the first year of peace, 1816. For the story of the eighteenth century is, as Professor Seeley has taught us, the story of the expansion of England. Externally it was the time during which Britain struggled with France for the Empire of the Seas, for the dominion of India, and for the opportunity of colonising the great sparsely populated lands of the world in the temperate zones beyond the ocean. Internally, it was the time during which the same proud aristocracy which conducted this struggle made itself the master of the land and of the peasantry. After Waterloo Britain emerged from the foreign struggle almost completely successful. She was Mistress of the Seas, she held securely that position of empire and of commercial supremacy which Portugal, Spain and Holland had partially grasped; and, though the original American colonies had broken away, the seed of

other great colonies had been planted in Canada, Australasia and South Africa. Nor was this proud position fated to be challenged during the succeeding ninety years, until in 1905 the present naval competition in Dreadnought building seriously began. With the beginning of the year 1816 the whole direction of national thought and energy was turned from the desperate struggle against the genius of Napoleon and the power of France to an almost equally desperate struggle for internal reform. The work of the nineteenth century began.

It was not by any means of their own free will that our forefathers of a century ago turned their minds so immediately to this new task, which was indeed the making of modern England. Throughout the latter years of the war, through the period when families in the south of England had scarcely dared to go undressed to bed for fear of the landing of the French during the night, through the years of Wellington's struggles and triumphs in Spain, and through the last effort that ended in the victory of Waterloo, men had continually looked forward to the coming of peace as a time for relaxation, prosperity and happiness. When peace actually came it brought with it instead even greater distress than had been known during the war. "Oh, wondrous Peace! Oh, Peace without a parallel!" is the exclamation with which the *Morning Chronicle* opened an outburst of astonishment and lament early in the year. After bidding the observer mark the desolation in town, the versifier bids him—

> Turn to the country, then, and witness there
> Tenants in gaol and landlords in despair;
> Industrious hinds that beg for work in vain;
> Recovered lands that turn to waste again.

As the year 1816 passed on, misery deepened into starvation, and almost frantic efforts to cope with the distress were accompanied by fierce controversies as to its causes and possible remedies. There was but slight improvement in 1817 and 1818, followed by an almost equal accession of

misery in 1819. These were four years of national purgatory; but during them the nation realised the necessity of radical national reform.

Agricultural Distress

Merely as an economic phenomenon the distress of the peace merits examination. In the first half of 1816 the outcry came almost entirely from the agricultural interest; in fact the King's speech at the opening of Parliament declared that the commerce, manufactures and finances of the country were in a flourishing condition, while it prudently abstained from referring to the condition of agriculture. The prosperity alleged to exist was probably regarded by both Houses as but a poor compensation for the distress of agriculture. It must be remembered that the condition of agriculture was then just as important to the country as that of all its other industries put together. By the estimates prepared for the Budget that spring, the incomes of persons engaged in trade, manufacture and handicraft in Great Britain were computed at a little less than thirty-four and a half millions, while the rents paid by occupiers of agricultural lands, assessed under Schedule B, amounted to nearly thirty-seven millions.

When the House of Commons turned to the consideration of the state of agriculture, as it did at the first opportunity, the stories told from all parts of the country were alarming. In Cambridgeshire only 8*d*. a day is given to strong, healthy men who are capable of the greatest labour."

Mr. Brand, member for Kent, reported that—

> "a farmer who was the last occupier of land in the parish of that county and on whom, of course, the payment of poor rates had devolved, came to him, imploring in the most earnest manner to inform him what he should do, as he was unable to bear the burdens laid upon him. Being asked what had become

of other occupiers of land in the parish, seeing he was left alone, 'Sir,' said the farmer, 'worn out by the wretchedness of the times they are not able to touch the land.' Land-holders to a man refuse to plough the land, and this farmer was to leave his farm at Lady Day. Where, then, had the poor any right to apply when there were none in their own parish to pay the rates? Undoubtedly they must go to the neighbouring parishes. Nor was this a solitary instance of the miserable state of the country; he was ready to furnish gentlemen with many of a similar nature, should it be deemed necessary. The poor in many cases had abandoned their residences. Whole parishes had been deserted, and the crowd of paupers, increasing in numbers as they went from parish to parish, spread wider and wider this awful desolation."

Through the months of February, March and April the Board of Agriculture[1] sent a series of questions to all its correspondents. To the question whether any farmers in the correspondent's district had given notice to quit, 37 answers out of 322 said that all farmers that could had given notice, 103 that many had, 111 that some had, and 71 that none had. The report of the Board added the note, "It is scarcely necessary to remark that, until the present period of depression commenced, such an idea as giving notice to quit a farm, except for the purpose of hiring another one, may be said to have been almost unknown in the kingdom." On the state of the labourers, 237 answers out of 273 asserted that there was want of employment, 101 describing extreme distress. Further, says the report, "Bankruptcies, seizures, executions, imprisonments and farmers becoming paupers are particularly mentioned by many of the correspondents; with great arrears of rent, and in many cases tithes and poor rates unpaid, extreme distress and absolute ruin in a variety of instances."

[1] A voluntary Association founded in 1793 with Sir John Sinclair as president and Arthur Young as secretary. It was in receipt of an annual grant from the Treasury till 1816. It ceased to exist in 1819.

Its Causes

The change from war to peace was only in part the cause of the agricultural distress, which, in fact, had been felt, though in less degree, in the years 1814 and 1815. The period of the war had been, on the whole, one of great prosperity for large farmers and owners of agricultural land. The growing numbers of the manufacturing population, the heavy purchases by the Government for the supply of the army and navy, the making of turnpike roads and canals, the rapid progress of enclosure and of other agricultural improvements, all contributed to swell profits and rents. As Brougham put it in the House of Commons (April 9, 1816)—

> "Not only wastes have disappeared for miles and miles, giving place to houses, fences and crops; not only have the most inconsiderable commons, the very village greens, the little strips of sward by the roadside, been in many places subjected to division and exclusive ownership and cut into cornfields in the rage for farming; not only have stubborn soils been forced to bear crops by mere weight of metal, by sinking money in the earth, as it has been called; but the land that already grew something has been fatigued with labour and loaded with capital until it yielded much more."

The increased production had only been sufficient for the increased wants of the people during the years of particularly good harvests. In bad years grain of all sorts leapt up to famine prices. This had been the case in 1800, when the price of wheat averaged 114*s.* for the year, and 1801, when it stood at 120*s.*, after which better years had followed. Then came the year 1810 with a deficient harvest, and 1811 with a very bad one. In August 1812 the price of wheat rose to 155*s.* per quarter. The harvest of 1812 was good, that of 1813, we are told, was the best ever known,[1] that

[1] Robert Wilson, Tract on the Distress in 1816.

of 1814 good again. Prices fell rapidly, that of wheat dropping to 52*s.* 6*d.* in January 1816. The inflation of prices, mainly produced by scarcity, had been aggravated by the depreciation of Bank of England notes, which reached a discount of about thirty per cent.; and both the scarcity and the depreciation of paper helped to force up rents and to stimulate the raising of money on mortgage for agricultural improvement. In 1813 there were about 700 country banks largely engaged in making such advances to farmers and landlords; as prices fell the country banks became alarmed and began to call in their notes, but in many cases they took alarm too late, for in the three years 1814, 1815 and 1816 no fewer than 240 were obliged to stop payment.[1] Meanwhile, partly perhaps as a result of the consequent diminution in the issue of notes of private banks, but more, no doubt, in consequence of the greater demand for money during the temporary peace from April 1814 to March 1815, the discount on Bank of England notes almost disappeared. This, again, aggravated the position of men who had borrowed money or who had contracted to pay rents at the time when paper had been depreciated.

The last straw on the tenant farmer's back, it was declared, was the income-tax of 2*s.* in the £. Farmers' incomes, for this purpose, were assessed at three-quarters of their rent, an arrangement which had probably been favourable to them in the days of high profits, but the reverse now, when they were largely living on their capital. It is not surprising that bankruptcies became more and more numerous through 1814 and 1815. The *Liverpool Mercury* (September 15, 1815) says the prisons were choked with farmers. The number of bailable writs and executions in Norfolk was 636 in 1814, 844 in 1815; 430 and 850 in the two years respectively in Suffolk; 640 and 890 in Worcestershire. A group of farmers in Lincolnshire emigrated in a body and took with them the village

[1] Brougham, House of Commons, April 9, 1816.

curate. According to the *Morning Chronicle,* they were frequently ready to sell themselves as contract labourers for a term of years in America in order to pay their passage money thither.

As a general rule the misery of the agricultural labourers reflected in an aggravated degree the suffering of the tenant farmers. It is true there were exceptions. Grass land naturally suffered less than the arable districts; and in Devonshire, for example, the chief cause of the agricultural depression, which was considerable in that county, was the suspension of purchases of meat by the Government. Cheshire, not so directly affected by this cause, appears to have scarcely felt the depression at all. Wherever the farmers were able to continue employing the full number of labourers, the latter gained through the great fall in the price of bread. There was, however, a strong move to reduce wages, whether paid directly by the farmer or indirectly out of the poor-rates by the corrupting and pauperising system of allowances. In 1814 the amount expended in Poor Law relief had risen to 12*s.* 8*d.* per head of the population. It was now argued, in the words of the *Courier* (June 20), the organ of the Tory party, that—

> "The lower classes have been accustomed to high wages and liberal allowances from the parish. These must be reduced as the price of provisions falls." And again, "Provisions have fallen in price, farmers are lowering wages, and a great part of the poors' rates are discontinued."

The movement to reduce wages, which had risen to 2*s.* or 2*s.* 6*d.* a day (when the price of a 4 lb. loaf was close upon 2*s.*) was certainly effective; but only a slight and temporary success attended the efforts to reduce poor-rates. Though the merits of the lavish outdoor system adopted during the war, in maintaining a high birth-rate and in making even labourers feel that they had a stake in the

landed property of the country, were no longer so important and desirable in the eyes of justices of the peace as they had been during the war, it was found practically impossible to reduce the poor-rates in the face of the miseries of the people, and the total rate reached its highest point in the year ending March 31, 1818, when it amounted to 13*s.* 9*d.* per head of population.

William Cobbett, writing in the *Political Register* of his own district in Sussex, gives a graphic picture of the condition of the labourers—

> "I have the good fortune to live in a part of the country where the labouring people are better off than in any part of England that I have seen. . . . (Indeed until the last three years, very little distress was known here.) But now it has found us out, and threatens to involve us in one general mass of misery. I could name numerous individuals, who are actually become a sort of skeletons. It is useless, however, to enter into descriptions; and I need only tell you, that since my return from London, in the month of March, more than 300 labourers have applied to me for work, and none of the 300 have I been able to employ, though the nature of my crops requires a great many hands. I see scores of young men, framed by nature to be athletic, rosy-cheeked and bold. I see scores of young men formed by nature to exhibit this appearance; I see them as thin as herrings, dragging their feet after them, pale as a ceiling and sneaking about like beggars." [1]

Agricultural Riots

To a certain extent the misery of the agricultural labourers vented itself in disorder. In one week at the end of April there were eleven incendiary fires in Suffolk, in May paper-mills were burnt down at Exeter and Top-

[1] August 10, 1816.

sham. Numerous fires took place in the neighbourhood of Honiton; in Bridport riots to reduce the price of provisions, and in Appledore and Bideford to prevent cargoes of potatoes from leaving those ports. Later there was an epidemic of incendiarism in Dorset. But by far the most formidable riots took place in Littleport and Ely, where, through the wholesale bankruptcy of farmers, an enormous area of land was left vacant and uncultivated. Fifteen hundred men collected, marching under a banner inscribed "Bread or Blood," armed with heavy sticks and demanding that maximum prices should be fixed for bread. Seventy-eight men were indicted before a special commission for their shares in these proceedings, twenty-four of them were condemned to death, and five were actually hanged at Ely.

It was reported that these five men went to the scaffold expressing contrition and acknowledging the justice of their sentence, but the agricultural labourers were not invariably ready to endorse the ruling code of ethics. One effect of the distress was an increase of poaching, and the rumour that the laws against poaching were to be still further increased in severity led to the following anonymous circular being sent to the magistrates of Somerset—

> "Take notice: We have lately heard and seen that there is an Act passed, that whatever poacher is caught destroying the game is to be transported for seven years. Now we swear to each other that the first of our company that this law is inflicted on, that there shall not one gentleman's seat in our county escape the rage of fire; we are nine in number, and we will burn every gentleman's house of note. The first that impeaches shall be shot. We have sworn not to impeach. You may think it is a threat, but they will find it a reality. The Game Laws were too severe before. The Lord of all men sent these animals for the peasant as well as for the prince. God will not let His people be oppressed; He will assist us in our

undertaking, and we will execute it with caution; let every one of us that breathe praise the Lord." [1]

I have not discovered, however, any instances of the execution of these threats.

The Corn Law of 1815 and the Harvest of 1816

It would appear that the agricultural distress of 1815 and 1816 was mainly due to the violent fluctuations of prices caused by the alternation of good and bad seasons. In so far as the cessation of Government purchases for war purposes came at a time when prices were rapidly falling through abundant crops, the condition of agriculture may be said to have been aggravated by the change from war to peace. Already, in 1814, when the forces of the Allies were seen to be overwhelming the resistance of Napoleon, the fear of foreign competition following upon peace had alarmed the agricultural interest, and had produced a demand for the prohibition of imports of food. This was not immediately successful, but in 1815 the first of the celebrated series of Corn Laws of the nineteenth century was passed, whereby the importation of foreign wheat was not permitted until the home price had reached 80*s*. per quarter, that of rye and pulse till the price was 53*s*. per quarter, nor barley under 40*s*., nor oats under 27*s*. It is possible that this measure facilitated the recovery of agricultural credit. It is at any rate the fact that in the autumn of 1816 very extensive ploughings were made; and the agricultural labourers became much more fully employed. To this result the failure of the harvest, otherwise disastrous, contributed.

The summer of 1816 was an extraordinary one. A long cold winter was followed by a cold wet spring and a dripping summer. The roads in July became almost impassable through constant heavy rains, and severe frosts set in in the beginning of September. The *Liverpool*

[1] *Morning Chronicle*, October 22, 1816.

Mercury records the following prices realised in Covent Garden on June 12: Cherries, 14*s*. per lb.; green peas, 8*s*. per qt.; new potatoes, 2*s*. per lb.; French beans, 6*s*. per hundred. To the end of November the corn was still standing in Lancashire in the icy fields. The wheat harvested was of so bad a quality as scarcely to be fit for human food; but it was so scarce in quantity that from December 1816 to the following July it was sold at over 100*s*. per quarter. An effective object-lesson in the working of the Corn Law on the consumer was thus supplied. There were four dates in the year on which the ports might be opened to foreign imports: February 15, May 15, August 15, November 15; provided that during the previous six weeks the price of food-stuffs had exceeded those laid down in the Act. On August 15 it was found that though the price of wheat at that date was 82*s*., the average for the previous six weeks was only 79*s*. and some odd pence. For three months, therefore, no foreign grain could be imported. Ships from the Baltic, which had started in anticipation of the opening of the ports, were turned back, and when the ports were opened on November 15, by which time the price had passed 98*s*., the Baltic was frozen over. Local scarcity had, moreover, caused a general prohibition of the export of grain from the Mediterranean countries; and in consequence no grain could be imported at all until the Baltic navigation opened in the spring, except for some ship-loads which had been sent back in August and which had been stored in Holland in the meanwhile, which now were purchased at greatly enhanced prices.

Trade and Manufacture in 1816

When we turn from agriculture to the other industries of the country, the influence of the violent change of industrial conditions produced by the war becomes the predominant feature. A little calculation will help us to realise how violent was the transition. Between 1802 and 1815 the war expenditure increased the National Debt at

an average rate of £30,000,000 per annum, in addition to necessitating a crushing burden in taxation. Towards the end of the period the expenditure out of loan reached £50,000,000 for several years in succession. The money so raised was, of course, mostly spent on the employment of men as soldiers, sailors and other ministers to the needs of war. Even in the case of subsidies, the money was directly spent in the employment of British industrial labour, the subsidies being paid in ammunition, clothing and other equipment. The effect of the sudden cessation of Government expenditure to the amount of over £50,000,000, mainly raised by loan, may be guessed when we consider how great that expenditure was in proportion to the total power of wealth production in the country. The population in Great Britain in 1816, taking the mean between the census figures of 1811 and 1821, was about 13,000,000; it was at the census of 1911, 40,834,714. The population has thus increased more than threefold, but the average production of wealth per head has probably also increased more than threefold, so that the expenditure of £50,000,000 per annum in the beginning of the nineteenth century would be commensurate with one of £500,000,000 per annum at the present day. It will be easy for the reader to work out, in imagination, the economic phenomena which would to-day follow the sudden cessation of such an enormous expenditure on war out of loans.

The reductions in the army and navy, together with the disbanding of the militia, are calculated to have liberated half a million men in the three years, 1814 to 1816. At first the men discharged were pretty rapidly absorbed in other industries; later they helped to swell the multitudes of unemployed.

During the war, countries under the control of Napoleon had been prohibited from importing British manufactures, the object of this policy being to cripple British manufactures by depriving them of their chief markets. The British Government had met the Berlin and Milan Decrees

of Napoleon by Orders in Council, which, whatever their merit as measures of war, added still further difficulties to the export of British manufactures. After the retreat from Moscow and the victory of the Allies at Leipzig (October 1813), Europe was reopened to British trade. An enormous outburst of speculative export followed. According to Brougham (House of Commons, April 9, 1816)—

> "Not only clerks and labourers, but menial servants engaged the little sums they had been laying up for a provision against old age and sickness. Persons went round tempting them to trade with Holland, Germany and the Baltic; they risked their mite in the hope of boundless profits, it went with the millions of the more regular traders. The bubble soon burst, like its predecessors of the South Sea, the Mississippi and Buenos Ayres; English goods were selling for much less in Holland and the north of Europe than in London and Manchester; in most places they were lying a dead weight without any sale at all; and either no returns whatever were received, or pounds came back for thousands that had gone forth. The great speculators broke; the middling ones lingered out a precarious existence, deprived of all means of continuing their dealings either at home or abroad; the poorer dupes of the delusion had lost their little hoards, and went upon the parish the next mishap that befell them."

Nor was this outburst of speculative trade, which overflooded and destroyed a market which had been grievously over-estimated, confined to Europe. The correspondence of the *Morning Chronicle* shows just the same thing happened in America. The American markets were grievously overstocked with all sorts of British manufactures: "Broadcloth, muslins, Manchester goods, Birmingham, Sheffield and Staffordshire wares, pins, Bristol glass, pianofortes

and almost everything you can mention." Bankruptcies among American traders were very frequent, because, after they had had forced upon them, at very low prices, as large quantities of goods as they dared to stock, the remaining portions of British cargoes were sold by auction to the general public for whatever they would fetch, in order to save the expense of bringing them back to England. In Belgium riots took place to prevent the sale of British goods. From Germany there arose an outcry that the new British tyranny which was determined to crush out German manufactures by the sale by auction of vast quantities of British goods at rubbish prices was still more dangerous and odious than the tyranny of Napoleon. There can be no doubt that the peculiar phenomena of British export trade at this period paved the way for the subsequent building up of hostile tariffs against England on the continent of Europe.

The Metal Industries

We might trace the progress of depression and unemployment from one industry to another. The direct effect of the cessation of war demands upon commodities most immediately affected, may be judged from the fact that the price of copper fell from £180 to £80 per ton, that of iron from £20 to £8, of hemp from £118 to £34. Of the London tailors four-fifths, according to Francis Place, were thrown out of employment, no doubt mainly through the cessation of demand for uniforms. The blow fell, naturally, heavily upon the metal-working districts of the Midlands. Birmingham was extremely busy through 1815 in that speculative export trade to which merchants and manufacturers turned as the war demand left the operatives free. In November 1815 trade became worse, money scarce, confidence disappeared, and stocks of goods accumulated until the manufacturers resorted first to short time and then to a complete cessation of work. Alarming letters appeared in August in the London papers with

regard to the misery of the people. In the five parishes of Bilston, Sedgeley, Tipton, Dudley and Kingswinford, it was stated that 15,000 operatives were thrown out of work. Correspondents spoke of multitudes living on cabbage stalks or anything they could gather from the fields, of men leaving their families to starve, and wandering about the country offering to work for farmers for a little food. In Birmingham one quarter of the population was stated to be destitute, at Walsall many respectable householders on being distrained for non-payment of rates were found to have pawned even their bedding. At Hinckley, in Leicestershire, two-thirds of the population were paupers and the poor rates mounted to 52*s.* in the £.

The Tory organ, the *Courier,* supposing that the distress was being exaggerated for party purposes, sent a Special Commissioner down to expose in a series of articles the supposed misrepresentations appearing in the *Times* and *Morning Chronicle.* His first letter sums the situation up in the following sentence: "Some inconvenience exists, but certainly not the grievous distress spoken of, unless it be in the manufacturing towns, where the effects of peace after war, and imprudent speculation, *have undoubtedly thrown a great majority of families out of bread.*" With this letter the series ended. Whatever further letters the Commissioner may have written failed to appear in his paper.

The cessation of activity in the metal-working industries naturally reacted upon coal-mining. In the Midlands the unemployed colliers hit upon the device of loading trucks with coal, harnessing themselves to them and marching to London to present the coals to the Prince Regent with a petition for help. As these melancholy bands reached London they were met by officials who bought the coal and sent the men home again. In South Wales the proprietors of the ironworks gave notice of successive reductions in wages, finally bringing the figure down to 6*s.* per

week. Wheat was then 100*s*. per quarter in South Wales, and the men preferred to starve idle rather than to starve working. Starting from Tredegar, the strikers went from forge to forge, putting out the fires and gathering together the workers. The chief employer at Ebbw Vale gave them bread and cheese, and offered them ale, which they declined, fearing that in their starving condition it would deprive them of self-control. To the number of about 15,000 they camped on the hills, till after some helpless and hopeless waiting they determined to take what work and receive what wage was obtainable.

The Textile Industries

The textile districts were but little better off than the Midlands and South Wales. The great inventions in spinning, dating mostly from the decade after 1760, had so cheapened production that the spinners could force their sales to a great extent even in the worst depression. But it was otherwise with the weavers. Though Cartwright's power-loom was invented in 1782, it was only after 1815 that it began to come into general use. The hand-loom weavers still formed the main body of textile workers. They largely combined agricultural work and the care of small holdings with their industry. They were traders as well as manufacturers, buying their yarn and selling their cloth. They formed, in fact, the *élite* of the working-class in Britain. The peculiar condition of the trade in 1816 is to some extent indicated by the fact recorded in the *Courier* (September 11), that the export of cotton twist from Hull to the continent of Europe, between January 1 and April 5, was just over one and a quarter million pounds, but that in the shorter period, from April 5 to June 25, it reached nearly three million pounds. It would appear that Continental duties and the revival of manufacture on the Continent were beginning to be effective in excluding British hand-woven cloth; but they could not keep out machine-spun yarn. The condition of destitution

among weavers in the north of England became very terrible. In Lancashire it was calculated that a weaver working full time could only earn 6*s*. 5*d*. a week, out of which 9*d*. would go for material; and an aged man and woman working together could only earn 4*s*.

The silk weavers in Spitalfields were no better off. The report of the "Association for the Relief of the Industrious Poor in Spitalfields and its Neighbourhood" authoritatively declared in November that two-thirds of them were unemployed.

Remedial Efforts

The country had been accustomed, during the great French war, to distress caused by bad harvests and scarcity of food. It was in 1816 faced with the peculiar problem of distress from unemployment, at a time when food, as compared with the previous years, was relatively cheap. It is not surprising that there were but the haziest ideas, even amongst those who had given most consideration to economic problems, as to how the emergency could be met. A great meeting was held in Westminster on Monday, July 29, called by the "Association for the Relief of the Manufacturing Poor," which had originally been formed in the famine year of 1812. The royal dukes took part; and the first resolution set out what may be termed the official view of the causes of distress: "That a transition from a state of extensive warfare, to a system of peace, has occasioned a stagnation of employment and a revulsion of trade, deeply affecting the situations of many parts of the community and producing many instances of great distress." As we have seen, there were some grounds for regarding this statement as being true in fact: but unfortunately it opened the way to no remedy, except once more to plunge the country into a state of "extensive warfare."

At the meeting at which this theory was propounded, the Radicals of Westminster, organised by Francis Place

and represented by Lord Cochrane, were in full force. Lord Cochrane moved an amendment attributing the distress to the pressure of taxation. This may be regarded as the Radical and, to some extent, the Whig view of the position. It was frequently expressed in the *Morning Chronicle,* which urged that trade was bad because the gentry had no money to spend, and the gentry had no money to spend because the Government had taken it all in taxes. Parliament may be said to have acted on this theory when it threw out the Government proposals to continue at 1*s.* in the £ the income-tax, which had been levied at the rate of 2*s.* in the £ during the war.[1] The Whigs had even succeeded in obtaining excited meetings against the income-tax among Wiltshire labourers, who were perhaps earning 6*s.* a week. It might be argued that by abandoning the income-tax the Government was deprived of the opportunity of repealing the taxes which really did press hard upon the working-classes, and of the funds which might have been used directly in the alleviation of distress. It must, however, be remembered that the Government in 1816 was not efficiently organised for such work, even if the funds had been available.

Another proposal that was made was that the nominal capital of the National Debt and the interest on it should be reduced in proportion to the general fall in prices. This proposal to recognise fluctuations in the purchasing power of money, by adjusting deferred payments, has since been further worked out under the influence of the Bimetallic controversy. Remedial suggestions of a sort were to be had in quantity. The Association above-named, and its royal patrons, gave careful attention to the proposal that the unemployed should be set to pick rushes and make them into mats, and to gather grass seeds in the London parks. The *Morning Chronicle* improved on this by

[1] The Government had further proposed that the incomes of tenant farmers should be estimated at one-third of their rents for the purpose of income-tax instead of at three-quarters as previously.

recommending that rows of tubs of brine should be placed round the coasts for the unemployed to put in the fish that they might catch. Fish so cured, the editor thought, might not be good enough for the Englishman, but they might be exported to the Continent.

Meanwhile the practical men organised themselves to cope with the distress by private charity. £40,000 was quickly raised by the "Association for the Relief of the Manufacturing Poor," mainly for the benefit of the Midlands, and this was supplemented by local funds in all the Midland towns. The Spitalfields Association, later in the year, raised in a few weeks £30,000, and a voluntary committee, organised by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Thomas Fowell Buxton, carried through the work of relieving the distress in the East End.

Influence of the Distress on Political Agitation

But another theory as to the nature of the malady and the appropriate cure was preached in such a way as to come home to the minds of those who were actually suffering. In the beginning of August William Cobbett lowered the price of his *Political Register* from 1*s.* 0½*d.* to 2*d.* Week by week he put forward his views with extraordinary directness and power. He declared that all Europe was suffering in a similar way to Great Britain, because all Europe was governed like Britain by corrupt and aristocratic monarchies. But in contrast he quoted current American wages and prices of necessaries, pointing out that in a land where the people governed themselves there was plenty for all who were prepared to work. He denounced violence and rioting and local agitations against retail tradesmen for putting up the price of bread, when it rose in sympathy with wheat. He urged his readers to concentrate on the one effort to end the tyranny of the Borough-mongers. The circulation of the *Political Register* went up by leaps and bounds. All over the country men formed themselves into clubs of a dozen or

twenty, to whom the most literate club member read out Cobbett's message week by week.

Thus out of the distress of 1816 was born the great popular movement of the beginning of the nineteenth century for political reform, while the months passed on, "with sorrow in our habitations, and with famine in our streets, with more than a fourth part of the population of the country subsisting upon alms, while those who have know not how soon they may cease to have the means of giving."[1]

[1] Liverpool Mercury, Jan. 17, 1817.

CHAPTER II

THE RURAL WORKER AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Decay of the Village Community

It is impossible to convey an understanding of the condition of the rural workers of the country at the beginning of the nineteenth century without briefly summarising a great deal of earlier history. Although even by 1815 the process was not complete, it was mainly during the previous century and a half that the existing organisation of English rural life was built up, whereby agricultural industry is conducted by tenant farmers employing landless agricultural labourers dependent on their wages for an existence, and paying rent to land-owners, mostly owners of large properties, whose estates are administered by professional stewards and lawyers. The very stamp of this system upon the scenery of the country, the farm-houses distributed singly over the surface of the land, instead of congregated in villages; the cutting up of the whole surface of the land into what are now commonly called fields, but which were originally called "enclosures," by quickset hedges with numerous trees—these features of the English landscape were the work, in the main, of the eighteenth century.

The village organisation of the Middle Ages, the Manor, was like the feudal organisation of the State itself, a balance of powers depending for the continuance of its characteristic features upon the equilibrium between the forces on either side. On the one hand there was the Lord of the Manor, with his steward and his bailiff, entitled to levy toll upon the working energies of the

villagers to the extent of something between a third and half of their time; on the other hand the body of villagers supported, as a rule, by the spiritual power and influence of the priest, himself usually of peasant extraction and depending for a living, to a considerable extent, on his scattered strips of glebe which were tilled in common with the lands of the other villagers. Peasant co-operated with peasant in supplying oxen to the village teams. The village smith and carpenter were public servants following their specialised trades in the village service, and entitled to a definite share in the produce of the village agriculture. Similarly the shepherd, neatherd or swineherd took care of the village flocks and herds according to rules laid down by local custom. Between villager on the one hand and steward and bailiff on the other there was doubtless a continual struggle, on the part of the steward to secure the satisfactory cultivation of that portion of the village land (usually one-half or one-third) to the produce of which the lord was entitled; on the part of the villagers to save for their own benefit as large a proportion of their working power as possible.

Side by side two changes passed over the manor as it was in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. On the one hand the serf gradually obtained personal emancipation and commuted in quit-rents, in money and kind, for his labour dues to the lord. On the other hand the privileged position of the Lord of the Manor gradually came to be based more and more upon ownership of land instead of on rights to the services of the people on the land. The demesne lands were more and more frequently let to tenants, many of whom represented the "servi" of Doomsday. A great step in this direction was made in 1235 by the Statute of Merton, which enabled Lords of Manors, on leaving sufficient pasture of the villagers on the waste, to enclose and appropriate the residue. This was extended by the Statute of Westminster, 1285, which enabled lords of manors, in which the waste was used as common pasture

by other manors, to enclose against their neighbours. It further provided against the creation of new rights of common by the erection of new buildings; and that, if after enclosure hedges were pulled down, the neighbouring villages could be distrained upon for damages. By these Acts the normal growth of the village through the extension of the village arable fields into the waste, and the more thorough utilisation of the waste for common pasture, was prevented, and the extension of cultivation henceforward was accompanied by a development of new agricultural estates carved out of the waste for the lord by the labour of his tenants.

Of the great shock administered to the manorial system by the Black Death, which made manorial cultivation of the demesne lands unprofitable to the lords and so stimulated the letting of these as sheep-farms, which also extinguished many properties by causing them to revert to the lords through lack of heirs, so much has been written that the subject is familiar to most readers. Concerning the still more familiar subject of the great extension of sheep-farming at the end of the fifteenth century and through the greater part of the sixteenth century, I would like to add a suggestion to explain one of the features of the movement which greatly puzzled contemporary observers.

During the period when such a bitter outcry over an enormous extent of country was arising, that the countryside was being depopulated, and that thousands of peasants were turned adrift to starve or rob, through the great extension of sheep-farming and the laying down of arable land in pasture, how was it that the price of wool remained relatively high and the price of grain relatively low? It seems to me probable that the primary economic cause of the increase of pasture and of enclosures was a revolution in the conditions of the trade in iron, which cheapened grain, and temporarily upset the balance which must be maintained between the products of arable and pasture in a country which feeds itself.

Professor Thorold Rogers has pointed out that one of the great causes of the poor results of medieval agriculture was the scarcity and dearness of iron, which induced the cultivator to be very sparing in the use of the ploughshare. For lack of sufficient ploughing and sufficient depth of ploughing, the natural herbage was not sufficiently rooted out to give the wheat or other grain a fair chance. From the point of view of pasture this defect in cultivation had a partially compensating advantage that it made the feed on the arable field, after the harvest was carried, which was enjoyed in common by the villagers, more valuable than it would otherwise have been; and it also increased the value as pasture of the fallow field, which constituted one-half or one-third of the arable land of the village at any one time, according as the village followed the two-field or three-field system. The Wars of the Roses marked the climax and the end of the extensive use of iron for defensive armour. After Bosworth Field the quantity of iron available for peaceful purposes must have been much greater; and the condition of internal order maintained by the Tudor monarchs made it possible for internal trade to be carried on with comparative ease and security, so that the iron of Sussex could be readily transported all over the country. As a matter of fact, a great increase in the output of iron took place at this time. It is natural to suppose that more abundant use of iron in the making of ploughshares and deeper and more effective ploughing would gradually follow, with the consequence that the old balance of prices as between grain and pasture would be upset, and a given amount of land under cultivation according to the old custom would yield very much more bread-stuffs, but less meat and wool. This economic cause for an extension of the area of pasture at the expense of arable must, I think, be allowed for in combination with the other economic and social forces konwn to have been operating—the development of British cloth manufacture, the depreciation of the cur-

rency, the dissolution of the monasteries, and the breakdown of feudalism.

Broadly speaking, what was happening was that the economic condition of British agriculture was passing out of a system of agriculture for local subsistence into one of agriculture for the profitable supply of a market, with a corresponding change in the social structure of the villager from status to contract. Old customs ceased to be honoured, and it more and more became the object of Lords of Manors and their underlings to administer the villages so as to secure maximum rents.

The Elizabethan Settlement

Had the political situation been different in the sixteenth century, it is possible that the modern English land system would have been established then instead of later; but the Crown was at that time enormously powerful. The Wars of the Roses and the development of artillery had destroyed the military power of the Barons; and the movement of the Reformation enabled Henry VIII to make himself supreme head of the Church. National sentiment, moreover, was growing rapidly in the hearts of the population, and this spirit was fanned progressively into an intenser life through the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Parliament became the instrument of the Ministers of the Crown, much as it is at the present day; instead of the instrument of the aristocratic opposition of the Crown, as it had been in the time of the Lancastrian kings. The agrarian situation, therefore, in the sixteenth century was dealt with according to certain clearly marked lines of national policy. The fundamental principles that we can see first vigorously expressed in More's *Utopia*, secondly tentatively embodied in legislation of the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary, and, thirdly, blossoming out in the great Elizabethan social code, may be defined as follows—

(1) The principle that the private interest of individuals

in the management of landed estates or in the management of commercial undertakings must be subordinated sternly to considerations of general public welfare.

(2) That the physical well-being and industrial efficiency of the working population must be safeguarded carefully on the one hand against idleness and laziness, on the other against inadequate sustenance and unemployment.

Miss Leonard's *Early History of English Poor Relief* shows very clearly how these principles dominated both the structure of the Poor Law code and its administration up to the time of the great Civil War. Exactly the same policy is expressed by the Statute of Apprentices, the Depopulation Laws and other Acts affecting agriculture. We may sum up the results of these Acts on the organisation of rural life by showing what was the position of the agricultural labourer in the eye of the law when Queen Elizabeth died.

By the Depopulation Acts it was provided that old tilled land must be kept under tillage by proprietors, unless they brought into tillage an equal area of old pasture; that all farm-houses that had been allowed to fall into decay must be re-erected, and holdings of twenty or forty acres attached to them; that the customary system of tillage in each district must be continued, although permission was given for cultivators to make arrangements by mutual exchanges of their scattered, intermixed strips of land in the meadows and arable fields to secure some consolidation of the holdings and greater freedom and convenience in cultivation. These Acts were intended, amid other objects, to secure to the labourer a continual demand for his services in his native village.

By the Statute of Apprentices the labourers' wages were fixed by Justices of the Peace according to the price of provisions. Wages so fixed were maximum wages. It was intended that they should be sufficient to provide the sustenance necessary for working efficiently, but no more. By this Statute, moreover, the labourer was bound to work,

if unemployed, for the yeoman or farmer who wanted his services.

By the Cottages Act of 1589 each agricultural labourer was entitled to a separate cottage, and to a holding of four acres of land. Taken in connection with the provisions of the Depopulation Acts, which required adherence to the customary method of cultivation, this Act gave the labourer statutory rights of common to the aftermath on the common field, and on the waste, both for pasture and fuel.

By the Poor Law, if no private employer desired to employ him, the labourer was entitled to remunerative employment under the direction of the parish.

It will be seen that there is no recognition here of the principles of democracy or of human equality. The labourer is to be kept in tutelage. The contemporary theory expressed by Lambarde in his *Perambulation of Kent,* that mankind are naturally divided between *ἄρχοντες* and *ἀρχόμενοι,* the class born to rule and the class born to be ruled, is evidently assumed without any question. But there is secured for the labourer, besides certainty of subsistence as far as the law could secure it, the opportunity of progressive advance in prosperity and position. For it was one of the redeeming features of the open field system of agriculture that as holdings consisted of small, scattered strips of land, mostly acres and half-acres, any given holding was easily divided, and that there could be an easy gradation from the minimum of four acres secured by law to every agricultural labourer up to the largest holdings in the township.

There remains a good deal of doubt as to the extent to which the provisions of these Statutes were carried out. Miss Leonard has shown that right up to 1640 there was a steady advance in the thoroughness with which the provisions of the Poor Law were put into execution. The Statute of Apprentices apparently, also, was pretty well obeyed. Historians have been apt to assume, much too hastily in my opinion, that the Depopulation Acts were a

failure. The assumption appears to have been originally based upon *a priori* economic arguments, and to have been persisted in without due consideration of the evidence. What evidence I have collected points strongly to the conclusion that while there were, no doubt, numerous cases in which the law was evaded or defied, and others in which particular lords obtained licences from the king to carry out local enclosures, yet, on the whole, the Depopulation Acts did effectively stop the conversion of tillage to pasture and local depopulation in a great majority of villages over the area to which they were intended to apply, which was the half of England in which arable farming had by tradition predominated. Compared with the policy of the Legislature during succeeding generations, the Elizabethan social and industrial code appears more and more fully justified, both in the wisdom of its aims and its successes in actual execution, the more it is examined. The law which was probably the least efficiently enforced was the Cottages Act. It is, however, important to remember that up to the year 1775, when this Act was repealed, every agricultural labourer had a statutory right of independent access to the soil.

The Great Rebellion

The great Civil War which broke out in 1642, and which may be said to have been concluded by the Restoration of 1660, broke rudely across the internal development of the country. It is desirable that English people should recognise, much more fully than they have been allowed to do by the histories in common use, how terrible a disaster this war was. Its character was complex. It was in the first place a political struggle to define the scope of the powers respectively of the Executive and the Legislature. It was also, to some extent, a racial contest, the stronghold of the Parliamentary party being in the districts peopled by men of Anglo-Danish descent, and of the King in the Celtic fringes of the West. There was a class division

between the landed gentry and the trading classes, and the towns on the whole tended to support the Parliament, the country districts more frequently the King. But fundamentally and essentially it was a contest between religious principles. In some respects the English Civil War is to be regarded as part of the great series of wars between Protestants and Catholics throughout Europe, which includes, also, the war of Dutch Independence, the war between the Huguenots and Catholics of France, and the Thirty Years' War. But there is an important difference. While the English Puritans held ideas on religion closely resembling those of the Protestants of Germany, Holland and France, the Cavaliers did not represent the spirit of Philip II nor of the Guises, but the spirit of the Renascence.

The two great spiritual movements of the Renascence and of the Reformation had reached England each in two successive waves; the former bringing with it much of the spirit of Florence and Athens, the latter of Jerusalem and Geneva. Each was in itself a great civilising agency, but unfortunately the conceptions characteristic respectively of the Renascence and the Reformation, of the right attitude of man towards pleasure and duty, led to mutual scorn among those who had adopted either set of principles whole-heartedly. John Milton did combine in a great measure the spirit of the Renascence and of the Reformation, and his works, taken as a whole, form the noblest literary monument of the combined influence on the English of Greece and Judæa, as St. Paul's Cathedral is the noblest memorial in architecture. Milton, again, in the *Areopagitica* pointed out the true solution of the spiritual conflict of the time, liberty of thought and speech, free and candid discussion, from which the victory of truth should emerge.

Had there been no other causes for civil war besides the division of opinion and feeling with regard to religious belief, this solution might have been reached. As a matter of fact, the religious issue being complicated by other

differences, Puritans and Cavaliers killed one another on the field of battle. The victorious Puritans then dubbed the Cavaliers Malignants, and as Malignants drove them into exile, sequestered their property, and in some cases sold them as slaves in the plantations of America. When the Cavaliers recovered power at the Restoration, they in turn embarked on a great campaign of persecution, passing Conventicle, Five Mile and Test Acts, expelling 2000 Puritan Clergy from the Church, and sentencing Quakers to transportation for refusing to take an oath.

A religious war is the least sordid of all wars, but perhaps for that very reason the most disastrous morally. In our own Civil War the noblest Puritans and the noblest Cavaliers mostly died in battle, or were ruined by the sacrifices which they made for their respective causes. Half-hearted partisans survived, who knew how to change sides at a convenient opportunity, or to lie low when the opposition was in power, with those who cared nothing for either cause, but fished cunningly in the stormy waters. Then, too, a subtle degeneration of character occurred in those partisans who were driven by party spirit into bitter enmity; while the miseries of a civil war, arising from a conflict of ideals reaching such a pitch as to devastate the country, tended to sicken ordinary men of all pretence at high principle and lofty ideal, and to usher in a period of gross materialism.

The Rule of the Squirearchy

When the war was over and the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 consummated, it was found that the political contest had resulted in the supremacy of Parliament. The late Mr. J. R. Green has taught the ordinary reader to regard this as a great triumph for the principle of liberty. But it brought no increase of freedom to the great mass of the people of England. The balance of power, both in the State as a whole and in the separate village communities, which was characteristic of the Middle Ages, was gone.

But while kingly power in the state was reduced to relative insignificance, in the village the local prince, the Lord of the Manor, now ruled without check. The landed aristocrats acquired a monopoly of power such as had not before been possessed by any one class, and they held this monopoly till 1832. They constituted the sole membership of the House of Lords and the practically entire membership of the House of Commons. They filled all the offices of State; as Justices of the Peace they exercised full control, both over the local administration of the whole country outside certain corporate towns, and also over the enforcement of the Criminal and Civil Law. They monopolised the Universities, and thereby, to a great extent, the organs of opinion. For their younger sons were reserved the positions of officers in the army and of incumbents in the Church. Thus they were able to carry out with no check or hindrance, beyond individual scruples, whatever policy they chose to adopt with regard to the land and the labourers on the land.

Gregory King's well-known estimate makes it clear that at the end of the seventeenth century the cultivation of the land was in the hands of a peasant class of varying status, a few being small freeholders, many more merely copyholders, others, again, holding land by lease, by annual tenancy, or at the will of the Lord of the Manor. Custom and old agreements which had become almost traditional were largely the basis on which the relations between the Lord of the Manor and the occupier rested. In 1676 a blow was levelled at all customary and verbal agreements. The first two sections of the Statute of Frauds (19 Charles II, c. iii) read—

> Clause I.—"All Leases, Estates, Interests of Freehold, or Terms of Years, or any uncertain Interest of, to or out of any Messuages, Manors, Lands, Tenements or Hereditaments, made or created by Livery and Seisin only, or by Parol, and not put in Writing,

and signed by the Parties so making and creating the same, or their agents lawfully authorised by Writing, shall have the Force and Effect of Leases or Estates at Will only, and shall not either in Law or Equity be deemed or taken to have any other or greater Force or Effect, any consideration for making any such Parol Leases or Estates, or any former Law or Usage to the contrary notwithstanding."

Clause II.—"Except nevertheless all Leases not exceeding the term of three years for the making thereof, whereupon the Rent reserved to the landlord, during such Term, shall amount unto two-third parts at the least of the full improved Value of the thing demised."

Hereby we see each Lord of the Manor has conferred upon him the statutory right to confiscate the little properties of those manorial tenants who were unable to bring documentary evidence of their rights, and to turn them into tenants-at-will liable to be dismissed from their holdings at any time for a whim. It is impossible at the present time to form any estimate as to the extent to which this power was exercised. It is most desirable that the question should be investigated, but probably no investigator would have any chance of success who did not have access to the private documents of the great houses which have continuously held large landed properties since the seventeenth century. It may perhaps be significant that Mr. H. H. Johnson has found from the records of the land-tax that the extension of small properties and land was proceeding at its maximum rapidity at the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century.

We may further note that the series of Game Laws begins from the Restoration.

Two clear principles dominate the policy of the governing class towards land during the eighteenth century: (1) the increase of rent, (2) the unchecked freedom of the landowner in the management of his estate.

As Dr. Cunningham has pointed out, the adoption by the whole governing class of the principle that it was the prime object of State policy that rents should be raised to the maximum, was not entirely based upon motives of class selfishness. It was held that rent supplied the State with its great fund of taxable wealth; and that in time of national emergency the greater the fund on which the State could draw, the more secure and powerful the nation would be. The eighteenth century was a time of almost continual foreign war, and to a great extent it was by taxation of rents that the fleets and armies which won for England her naval and colonial supremacy were financed. Not only was a tax of 4*s*. in the £ levied upon rents, estimated, however, on the assessment of 1696, but in the final climax of the struggle, when Pitt's income-tax was levied, it was paid mainly out of rents, the landlord paying in this way ten per cent. of the rent he received, and the tenant farmer paying in addition seven and a half per cent. of the rent due from him if over £67. Land monopoly, says Professor Vinogradoff, was the price England had to pay for empire.

Enclosure in the Eighteenth Century

Broad lines of policy for the management of estates are laid down with great lucidity by Edward Lawrence, a professional agent, in *The Duty of a Steward to his Landlord,* published in 1727. We may quote—

> "A Steward should not forget to make the best Enquiry into the Disposition of any of the Freeholders within or near any of his Lord's Manors to sell their Lands, that he may use his best Endeavours to purchase them at as reasonable a price as may be for his Lord's Advantage and Convenience . . . especially in such Manors where Improvements are to be made by Inclosing Commons and Common Fields. . . . If the Freeholders cannot *all* be persuaded to sell, yet at

least an Agreement for Inclosing should be pushed forward by the Steward" (page 9).

"The Steward should not suffer any of the Lord's lands to be let to Freehold Tenants within or near his Lord's Manor" (page 34).

"The Steward should endeavour to lay all the small Farms, let to poor indigent people, to the great ones. . . ." But "it is unwise to unite farms all at once, because of the odium and increase of Poor-rates. It is much more reasonable and popular to stay till such farms fall into Hand by Death" (page 35).

"Noblemen and Gentlemen should endeavour to convert Copyhold for lives to Leasehold for lives" (page 60).

There can be no doubt that this pronouncement represents both the views and the actual practice of those responsible for the administration of the land through the eighteenth century. It is a policy of slow extermination of the peasantry. The small freeholder is to be checked and hampered at every turn (detailed methods of doing this are suggested in various passages by Edward Lawrence) in order that he may the more easily be induced to part with his freehold, becoming, perhaps, a tenant, and possibly obtaining greater opportunities thereby of making profit out of farming, but also becoming dependent for his opportunity of making a livelihood on the good will of the lord and his steward.

Then with regard to the great class of small copyholders; instead of being allowed to commute their liabilities and become freeholders, they are to be degraded into leaseholders, by methods which are not clearly indicated, but which were too probably in practice a mixture of legal chicanery and bullying. The particular form of copyhold referred to was prevalent in the South and West, as, for example, in Devon and Cornwall, Somerset and Gloucestershire, and all the Cotswold country. The copyholder held

his property during the continuance of three specified lives, which, it would appear from Carew's reference to copyhold in Cornwall, were originally those of himself, his wife and his eldest son. The copyholder had the right, on payment of a definite fine, to substitute a new life as any one of the three expired. When copyhold for life is converted into leasehold for life this right disappears, though, of course, an arrangement to re-life may be made if both parties desire it. It is obvious that this transition could easily be made by the zealous steward at the expense of an ignorant peasantry, with the result that the copyholder's descendants were disinherited.

While freeholders and copyholders are thus alike being converted into small tenants, and, again, tenants at long lease being turned into tenants on short lease, annual tenants or tenants-at-will, as tenants they were further victimised by the process, advocated by Edward Lawrence and generally followed throughout the country, of enlargement and consolidation of farms. Side by side, therefore, a class of large tenant farmers and a much more numerous class of landless agricultural labourers were being created out of the peasantry of England.

The policy of enclosure is curiously intermixed with the policy of consolidation of estates and aggregation of farms.

Although much has been written of late to explain just what enclosure meant, it is perhaps worth while to point out here its most important features. Generally speaking, an Act of Enclosure, or an enclosure carried out without an Act, was one of two well-marked types. In the North and West generally, and also in the extreme South-east corner of England, an Act of Enclosure was generally the enclosure of a piece of waste land which had previoulsy been used as common for pasture and fuel. The moor, waste or other tract of common land was divided among the owners of the neighbouring properties, in some sort of approximation to the proportions according to which use had been made of it by their tenants while in a state of

commonage. Such enclosure extended the area of cultivation, and increased the local demand for labour and the local prosperity, while it frequently inflicted serious injuries upon cottagers and other poor tenants who had previously been able to keep cows, geese or other animals, and to obtain their fuel from the common.

The Open-field Village

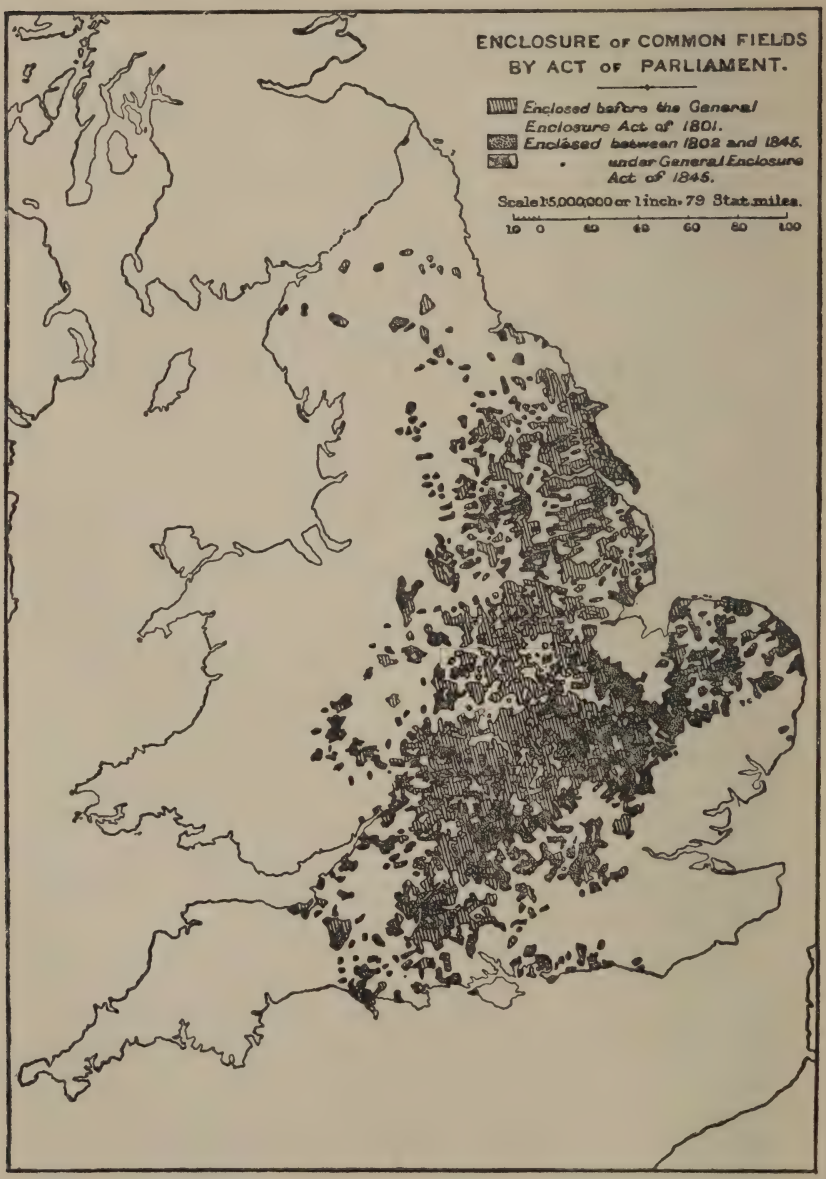
The other type of enclosure was more complicated, more important and more numerous. Out of the 4000 Acts of Enclosure passed during the eighteenth century and in the first part of the nineteenth century up to the General Enclosure Act of 1845, almost exactly two-thirds were Acts for enclosing open-field townships in which arable and meadow was subject to common rights as well as the permanent pasture. In a typical township of this sort the dwellings were collected together in the village, in the midst of which there might be a village green. Broad grass strips led from the green to the more remote parts of the township which were used as common pasture. A strip or strips of suitable land running along the streams in the parish would be set aside for meadows; and the greater part of the land in the immediate neighbourhood of the village would be in two, three, or four arable fields. The arable fields were divided into long, rectangular patches of various sizes, from one-quarter of an acre upwards, but averaging, as a rule, about one acre. The meadow was divided into even smaller strips. Each holding, whether freehold, copyhold, leasehold, or other tenancy, consisted of a certain number of scattered strips in each of the arable fields, together with a proportionate number of scattered strips in the meadow. The tenant would plough and sow his arable strips according to the custom of the village. Thus, if there were three fields, a three-year rotation would be followed, of wheat, spring corn, and fallow. He would also carry hay from certain portions of the meadow land, in some places being entitled to certain

definite known strips, in other places receiving his share by rotation or by the drawing of lots. When the hay was carried the meadow became a cow common till early spring; and when the harvest was carried on the arable fields under crops, these, too, were thrown open; while the field in fallow would be used as common pasture all the year round. With a number of interesting local variations, this was the method of agriculture that prevailed at the end of the seventeenth century over the central half of England; the extent of the open-field country being indicated pretty clearly by the shaded portion in the map showing the distribution of parliamentary enclosures enclosing arable land.

Results of Enclosure

When in such a village as this the principal proprietor had obtained the assent of a complacent House of Commons to a private Act of Enclosure, the village was handed over for a period of several years to the control of Enclosure Commissioners, who represented the interests of the Lord of the Manor, the tithe-owner and the large proprietors. It was the duty of the Commissioners to ascertain who were the owners of land and rights to common, and the proportionate value of their respective interests. They had then to redivide the whole of the township among the different proprietors, requiring each to fence off land allotted to him by quickset hedges, and to prevent those hedges from being destroyed by sheep or otherwise until they were strongly grown.

A great deal of controversy arose at the time, and has been continued since, with regard to both the agricultural and social aspects of the great campaign of enclosure throughout the open-field districts of England. But the difference between the controversialists is really not so much one of actual contradiction as of varying emphasis, and this applies even to the last two books on the subject, *The Village Labourer*, by Mr. and Mrs. Hammond, and


ENCLOSURE OF COMMON FIELDS
BY ACT OF PARLIAMENT.
Enclosed before the General Enclosure Act of 1801.
Enclosed between 1802 and 1845.
" under General Enclosure Act of 1845.
Scale 1:5,000,000 or 1 inch = 79 Stat. miles.
100 0 20 40 60 80 100

Common Land and Enclosure," by Professor Gonner. The following summary may be regarded as being outside the range of reasonable controversy.

Particularly towards the latter part of the eighteenth century some great change was necessary in the open-field system, especially with regard to the exercise of common rights, in order to fit it to take advantage of new methods of cultivation. New agriculture was being pushed forward by energetic and progressive landlords. So far as they were concerned, the readiest means to their hands of improving agricultural methods was to make a clean sweep of the old system, and to start afresh with the assistance of the most progressive of the old tenants, who could be selected by their willingness to pay high rents. It has been urged that enclosure was necessary for progressive agriculture. If the word enclosure is used in its broadest possible sense, viz. some important change in the common-field system, this is obviously true. For instance, turnips could not be grown in the open fields without some modification of the prevailing custom with regard to the opening of the fields for common pasture at a particular time. It was, however, quite possible for the common-field system to be modified by local agreement to any extent necessary, without actual enclosure. Whatever doubts might have existed on the subject were settled by the Act of 1773 for the regulation of the cultivation of common arable fields.

Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that enclosure greatly facilitated agricultural progress, both in the improvement of breeds of cattle and sheep and in the substitution of root crops for bare fallows. During the great struggles of the eighteenth century, particularly during the war with the French Republic and Napoleon, the increase in the gross and also in the net produce of the land was a matter of urgent national importance. But, on the other hand, it is easy to exaggerate the economic gain of enclosure. When the practical details of the common-

field system are explained to one unfamiliar with them, as, for example, when a farmer says, "I have a farm of sixty acres in a hundred different patches," and dilates upon the possibilities of friction between occupiers of neighbouring strips in the open fields, one is inclined to marvel how such a system could have been worked at all. But it was by no means an uncommon experience that the results of enclosure were very disappointing. Frequently the gross produce of the land diminished. The common saying was "Enclosure makes a good farmer better and a bad farmer worse." It was no surprise to me when I asked the chief promoter of one of the most recent important enclosures of common-field whether the enclosure benefited the parish, to receive his answer, "Yes! the enclosure certainly was a benefit, *but the parish has not recovered from it yet.*" Some twenty years had elapsed.

While the effect of enclosure was immediately stimulating to agricultural progress, it is by no means so certain that its permanent effects were beneficial. It is a very striking fact that the one part of England where the movement was successfully resisted in the eighteenth century, the Isle of Axholme, has abundantly justified what Arthur Young called its barbarous refusal to enclose its arable fields. Not only are the open fields of the Isle of Axholme exceptionally well cultivated at the present time, but the island also serves as a training-ground in practical and effective farming, and men who begin as labourers there frequently become large farmers elsewhere.

Both the net produce of land available for feeding the urban centres and the rent were increased very largely by enclosure. Perhaps the most extreme case was that of Long Sutton in Lincolnshire, where rent was raised from an average of 5*s*. per acre to between 30*s*. and 50*s*. Double or treble rents were not uncommon, though there were cases in which the increase of rent was insufficient to pay interest on the very heavy costs of enclosure. As we have

previously seen, increase of rent was the test by which the success of the management of the land was judged.

The Fate of the Peasantry

If we turn to the effect of enclosure upon small holders, agricultural labourers and other cottagers in the district affected, we find that there was a very general loss to those classes of the advantages which they had enjoyed from the land under commonage, without any adequate compensation. The cottagers who exercised common rights by virtue of occupying particular cottages, lost these common rights, and obtained instead the sentimental satisfaction of knowing that an allotment of land had been made to the owner of the cottages. They would have no opportunity of getting any benefit out of that allotment of land, nor, so far as I have been able to trace, is there any case on record of the rents of the cottages being reduced.

Cottagers who were small copyholders or freeholders frequently failed to obtain allotment of land in compensation for their common rights through inability to produce documentary evidence that they were entitled to such rights. The name of one Enclosure Commissioner has been put on record as having been in the practice of making allotments to all cottagers who could prove that they had actually exercised the right of common. He appears to have been a very rare exception, if not the only one, to the general rule.

In those cases where the cottager could prove beyond doubt his right to an allotment, he got it, but more often than not it was so situated and conditioned that he was glad to sell it for a small sum of money, which, as a rule, was speedily spent. Thus, for example, a cottager who had been accustomed to keep a cow and to get all his fuel from the village waste, might be given an acre, or perhaps two, somewhere away on the edge of the parish, perhaps a couple of miles from his home. He would then be required to pay his proportion of the parliamentary cost of enclosure,

to fence his allotment, and to plant a quickset hedge along one side of it, as the condition of retaining it, and he would usually be unable to do anything of the sort.

It must be remembered that it was a profession—and a profitable one—to be a Commissioner for Enclosure by private Act, and that a good connection in this profession depended upon the carrying out of the work in a manner satisfactory to the chief landowner, whatever might be the consequences for the peasantry.

It should be further noted that what has just been said about the fate of the cottager on enclosure applies equally to cases of enclosure of the land of the village generally and of commons in the modern sense, "waste of a manor." But when we consider the indirect effects upon the labourer through the effect of enclosure upon the demand for agricultural labour, it is necessary for us to consider separately the two types of enclosure. The hedge is really a piece of labour-saving machinery, and labour-saving machinery may result either in increased production or in a diminution of the workers directly employed. Where the land enclosed had previously been pretty well cultivated in open fields, enclosure produced local depopulation. This was particularly the case in certain midland counties—Leicestershire and adjoining shires—where there was, on the whole, a considerable increase in the proportion of pasture. Wherever enclosure was of waste only, the local demand for labour would naturally increase. This was also the case in a large part of Norfolk, where the open-field parish had a very large proportion of common pasture, and where the proportion of land under arable was greatly increased by enclosure. In Lincolnshire, where a great deal of the arable fields had been under the two-field system, similar conditions were found. On the other hand, where the balance between pasture and arable was left undisturbed, the necessary work required fewer hands after the holdings had been made compact, and animals could be turned into paddocks and left unwatched.

Professor Gonner has shown that it is very difficult to prove, by the recorded statistics, any definite connection between enclosure and the increase of poor-rates. On the other hand there could be no doubt that there was a very intimate connection between the degeneration of poor-law administration in the eighteenth century and the social transformation which was taking place in the villages. The connection is complicated, and much further investigation will be necessary before it can be satisfactorily understood. Further consideration will be given to the question below.

Socially and morally, complete enclosure and, to a less extent, enclosure of waste, made a great difference to the spirit of the village. Before enclosure, holdings, whether of yeomen proprietors or of tenant farmers, were mostly small, many of them very small; and, on the other hand, it was easy for even a propertyless labourer to rent a few acre or half-acre strips. If he did not, he might still exercise common rights; and, in consequence, there would scarcely be found any men who were completely debarred from independent access to the soil, even after the repeal in 1775 of the Act of Elizabeth which provided that every agricultural labourer should have the opportunity of occupying four acres of land. There would be an imperceptible gradation from the poorest labourer, through different grades of men who spent their time partly working for hire and partly upon their own holdings, up to the larger farmers. But, as a rule, after enclosure the holdings were made few and large. They were occupied by the fortunate few who were possessed of more capital or more skill and enterprise. On the whole, these men generally prospered; but for the others there was the choice between emigration, migration to the towns, or becoming labourers henceforward with but little hope of rising out of that class.

The Revolution in Spinning

Important as was the influence of the progress of enclosure upon the fortunes of the villagers of England, the

great decline in the prosperity of the labourer which took place towards the end of the eighteenth century was in a far greater degree due to the inventions which revolutionised spinning, from Hargreaves's jenny in 1764 to Crompton's mule in 1779. Spinning was a very important bye industry for the families of agricultural labourers, and the universality of the spinning-wheel is indicated by the resolution of the Rutlandshire magistrates as late as 1793 to refuse poor relief to the family of any agricultural labourer if the children did not show proficiency in spinning in proportion to their age. As soon as the new factories were fully developed, and the machines invented for cotton were applied to wool, linen and silk, they naturally monopolised the market for yarn. The labourer's family had then to subsist upon its earnings in agriculture alone. In a considerable number of villages it may have happened that the agricultural and manufacturing changes were simultaneous, so that the labourer found himself deprived of the profitable use of the spinning-wheel, of rights of common, of pasture and fuel, and of the opportunity to rent a little piece of land, at the same time; and this at a time when money wages, though increasing, failed to rise in proportion to the increase of prices of food.

The Poor Law in the Eighteenth Century

The Elizabethan Poor Law, which threw upon the Overseers and Churchwardens of each parish the responsibility of providing against unemployment and other causes of destitution, depended for its successful working upon a fairly high level of public spirit in the village, and intelligent and friendly supervision by the Justices of the Peace, and upon the supervision of the Privy Council in case of failure in the administration of any locality. Up to the outbreak of the Civil War the Privy Council performed its function, with the result that the standard of local administration was continually improving. After the Civil War there was no central supervision until 1834. Miss Maud

Davies's inquiry into the village of Corsley, in Wiltshire, and that of Mr. Arthur Ashby into administration of Tysoe, in Warwickshire, give us some reasons for thinking that in parishes where small properties and holdings were relatively numerous, the Elizabethan Poor Law continued to be administered in as satisfactory a manner as might well be expected. Probably such villages were exceptional.

But after the Restoration the spirit of Parliament was changed. In 1662 the first of the notorious series of Settlement Acts was passed. It authorised any two Justices of the Peace, on complaint from the Churchwardens or Overseers, to send back to his native place or last place of settlement, within forty days of his arrival, any new-comer in the village who failed to obtain a holding of £10 per annum or upwards. Subsequent Acts passed in 1685 and 1692 required that the forty days should only begin to count from the time that the new-comer handed in notice in writing to the Overseers, and that a list of those people who settled in the parish should be read out in church. The gradual building up of the statute law in relation to settlement marks the approach of a time when parishes were at war with one another, each endeavouring to plant as many as possible of its potential paupers upon its neighbours, and to maintain its own borders against in-comers. As settlement could be obtained by apprenticeship, it was an object of special effort on the part of Overseers to bind the parish orphans to any employer outside the parish who would take them, without regard to the future lot of the unfortunate boy or girl. In this struggle those parishes were fitted to prevail in which there was either a single landlord with full control, or but two or three who acted in concert. In such cases the practice was sometimes adopted of forming what was known as a close parish, where no labourers were allowed to live, the work of the farms being done by labourers living in some neighbouring congested "open parish."

During the first half of the eighteenth century Poor Law

administration, bad enough in all other respects, was at any rate successful in keeping down the poor-rates. The Act of 1662 had provided for the building of workhouses in the cities of London and Westminster and in the counties of Middlesex and Surrey. Further stimulus was given to the movement for erecting workhouses by the example of Bristol in 1690 and by the Act of 1722, which authorised the offer of maintenance in a workhouse and the refusal of any other relief.

About the middle of the century, however, the policy of the governing class was modified by other considerations. A scare arose about the numbers of the population. A Dr. Price drew attention to the fact that the number of inhabited houses which paid taxes was declining, and he argued that the numbers of the population were decreasing in a similar ratio. The inference, no doubt, was wrong, but it is impossible to say in what measure the facts Dr. Price relied upon really indicated an increase in overcrowding, or merely greater laxity in the collection of taxes. His position was vigorously controverted at the time, but Parliament was sufficiently impressed to pass laws to encourage aliens to settle in the country in order to make up the supposed deficiency, and for the remainder of the century the need of encouraging an increase of population was taken for granted.

When the Great French War broke out in 1793, other motives were brought to play upon Poor Law administration. It was considered necessary to make the working classes, both in town and country, as immune as possible to the infection of republican aspirations, by emphasising the peculiar advantage which the English Poor Law gave to the labourer, by giving him a definite stake in land and other property. Hence, in the early years of the war, in rapid succession, (1) the Law of Settlement was so far altered that a labourer could no longer be driven away from the parish in which he settled unless he actually became chargeable to the Poor Law; (2) the Workhouse Test was

abolished; and (3) the County Magistrates began seriously to consider the problem of maintaining the physical efficiency of the labourers. As Mr. and Mrs. Hammond have pointed out, various courses, more or less statesmanlike, were open to them. The best of the landlords, headed by Sir John Sinclair, the Earls of Carrington and Winchilsea, with Arthur Young, urged the provision of small holdings and the voluntary adoption by landlords of the policy of three acres and a cow. Had the principle of *laisser-faire* been less dominant, it is possible that steps would have been taken by the legislature to have revived in this way one part of the Elizabethan code. But the mere fact that such small holdings were known to be profitable to landlords as well as advantageous to the labourers, made it, as was supposed, unnecessary to use legislative pressure. Some new small holdings were created, particularly in the Midlands, but these were too few to affect the situation sensibly.

The labourers themselves demanded, when they ventured to give expression to their feelings, that their wages should be fixed according to the price of grain or flour, in accordance with another part of the Elizabethan code. It was hardly to be expected that this demand would be granted. It might not be easy to lower wages once they had been raised in so considerable a degree.

Other persons suggested an alteration in the diet of the labourer, which had now, by degrees, come to consist almost exclusively of white wheaten bread, instead of the great variety of breads and porridges, with milk, eggs and a larger proportion of meat, which had been customary in earlier times. To a certain extent potatoes did supersede bread in the labourers' dietary. But all attempts to substitute cheaper grains for wheat failed.

The solution actually adopted was the easiest but the most calamitous; it was to supplement the labourer's starvation wages with an allowance from the parish fund, sufficient to make the total up to what was regarded as a

bare but sufficient maintenance for the family. Mr. and Mrs. Hammond have shown that through the country the estimate of benches of magistrates as to what was a sufficient maintenance became lower and lower, the later bread scales being considerably less generous than the earlier ones.

It is a fundamental mistake to attribute primarily to this new method of administering Poor Law the degradation of the labourer which followed; the main cause, of course, was the fact that the independent labourer could not, as a rule, maintain an existence upon the wages which he earned. The so-called Speenhamland policy of out-relief according to bread scale saved the population from starvation. Combined with lowness of wage, with the decay of subsidiary village industries, and with the practically complete success of the landowners' policy of land monopolisation, it left the labourer when the war was over in a condition of practically compulsory pauperisation, reckless, insubordinate and of deteriorated industrial quality, while illegitimacy was becoming so prevalent that in many villages it was rare for a girl to become a bride before she became a mother.

CHAPTER III

THE URBAN WORKER AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Apprenticeship System

The policy of the Elizabethan statesmen with regard to manufacturing industry was fundamentally the same as their policy with regard to agriculture. Here, too, the system of the Middle Ages was being broken down by the development of an international trade, a wider competition for wealth, and the weakening of custom. The aim of the legislature was, therefore, to create a new national organisation based on those features of the gilds of the Middle Ages, which seemed to be still suitable to the changing conditions. To a great extent the basis of the new regulation was the Statute of Apprentices. Miss Dunlop, in *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour,* declares that "in all probability the Elizabethan system of apprenticeship was the most efficient system of training which has ever been available for the mass of the nation." Its value, of course, depended very largely upon the continued existence of associations similar in character to the gilds, and much effort was spent in the organisation of companies both for trade and manufacture. It may seem excessive that seven years should be spent in learning a comparatively simple trade, but the great problem of dealing with the labour of the young is to secure that the future efficiency and well-being of the youth shall not be sacrificed for the purpose of exploiting to the utmost his

undeveloped skill and immature abilities. A long apprenticeship was a simple device, and probably the best then available, for securing that it should be to the master workman's interest to teach his apprentice thoroughly during the first part of the period of apprenticeship in order to secure skilled assistance from him in the later period. Quite young children were employed under the system, and the hours of labour were sometimes very long. There was certainly a considerable proportion of cases of hardship; and the Puritan movement, no doubt, exaggerated the natural disposition of the hard-working craftsman to regard the eagerness of his apprentice for football and other games as the promptings of the Evil One. But the tendency of employers to exploit child labour unduly was, on the whole, very effectively checked by the apprenticeship system, and its general tendency was to breed a great body of efficient and self-respecting craftsmen.

From the time of the Civil War the system of apprenticeship gradually underwent decay. The law of 1563 remained in nominal operation until 1814, but there was little disposition to enforce it. Its scope was limited by the conclusion reached by the lawyers that it did not apply to any new industries, hence, for example, the whole cotton industry was regarded as outside its scope.

During the eighteenth century the custom whereby the apprentice lived with his master was less and less observed. While, on the one hand, in certain comparatively well-paid crafts the practice of apprenticeship remained, with the addition of the payment of considerable premiums, in poorer trades apprenticeship was more and more utilised as an adjunct to poor law administration. It is interesting to note that the repeal of the Statute of Apprentices in 1814 was occasioned by the appeal of the work-people for its better enforcement, and was a consequence of the influence exercised by the doctrine of *laisser-faire*. The older idea of the necessity of maintaining the standard of material and workmanship in British industry, both from

the point of view of justice to the home consumer and of the prestige of British manufacture in foreign countries, had gradually lost its hold over Parliament.

In one respect, however, there was no change in the tone of current opinion from the sixteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century. In neither was there any doubt that "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do," and even those pioneers in the educational movement who urged that children should be sent to school to learn to read and write, fully admitted that schooling should not be pushed to such an extent as to interfere with the earliest possible employment of children in useful industries. Thus, for example, the Bishop of Gloucester in 1730 preaching at St. Sepulchre's Church, Holborn, on behalf of a charity school, explained, "That they" (the children) "may be above no kind of labour, their dress should be little regarded on week-days; they should attend school at leisure hours, only at such times as their friends have no work for them; and should be taught no more than their prayers and their Catechism and to read their Bible and to write plainly and legibly; and as soon as ever they are of years and big enough should be dismissed the school and betake themselves to earn their bread by any kind of honest labour they can get to be employed in."

The Factory System

When in consequence of the inventions mentioned at the close of the last chapter, spinning factories, employing a large amount of child labour, sprang up towards the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, many causes contributed to make the lot of those children most deplorable.

(1) It has already been shown how these factories reacted upon the well-being of the agricultural population. In that way they helped to create a condition of pauperisation and destitution which they also exploited.

(2) For a whole generation the spinning factories mainly relied upon water for their motive power, and they were accordingly placed in hilly districts, as on the western slope of the Pennine Range, which provided streams of rapid fall. In consequence the new mills were placed in quite little villages, or even at a considerable distance from habitations. The record of the New Lanark Mills, under their original proprietor, sufficiently illustrates the difficulty of finding the necessary labour. At first Mr. Dale endeavoured to get the Lanarkshire shepherds to work in his factory, but though he offered higher money wages than they were accustomed to, he found it very difficult to persuade them. Later he succeeded in getting hold of a body of shipwrecked sailors; but he finally entered into arrangements with a philanthropic society in Edinburgh to take over orphan and destitute children in regular batches. The same difficulty was experienced by English employers and surmounted by a similar device. Arrangements were made with the churchwardens and overseers of London parishes and of rural districts, who, for reasons indicated above, were glad to place the children with any willing employer, without inquiry and without provision for supervision. Thus a new slave trade grew up in England; children even being bought and sold if, through bankruptcy or other reasons, their original employer desired to part with them before their indentures were complete.

(3) The country was familiar enough with the principle of child labour, but it was a new thing that children of six years and upwards should be yoked to the tireless machine and compelled for twelve or even sixteen hours a day to pay unremitting attention to tedious duties. It was a new thing that industries should be carried on by machines which represented a considerable expenditure of capital, and which were continually becoming obsolete through the introduction of fresh improvements. The economic motive to exploit the machine and, therefore, the

child worker to the utmost, was balanced only by the philanthropy of the employer—a varying factor. Of David Dale it was said in 1792 by an enthusiastic reporter, "The various provisions which this extraordinary man has made for the health of the children employed by him are highly praiseworthy. They have every day some hours allowed to them for exercise in the fields—their apartments are likewise clean and well-aired, and ten schoolmasters are daily employed in their education." But even these peculiarly fortunate children went into the mill at from five to eight years of age; and their hours of labour were from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., after which the ten schoolmasters performed their part.

(4) It will, I think, be admitted by all who have had experience with young children that it is impossible to obtain unremitting attention from them without the severest coercion. It is hard to see how the overseers in charge of the spinning factories could have obtained the results demanded of them by the proprietors without systematic cruelty, and, it is, I believe, a melancholy psychological fact that a systematic exercise of cruelty gradually develops a morbid condition of mind which takes delight in inflicting cruelty.

(5) The next feature that requires to be emphasised is the peculiar helplessness of the pauper apprentice and the attitude of public opinion towards the idea of limiting the amount of labour required from him and regulating its conditions. The pauper apprentice had no friends or relatives likely to inquire after his welfare. He grew up grossly ignorant, probably in a great majority of cases debased and demoralised, fit for little more, when of age, than to treat other children as he had himself been treated. Flight might be attempted, and we are told of cases of blacksmiths kept continually at work forging fetters, and of horses always kept saddled and ready to run down the refugee. Combination was obviously out of the question.

(6) As for the attitude of public opinion, the strong

view held on the importance of training children to industry, and the sentimental view that they were good and happy in proportion as they were kept usefully employed, were combined with the rising economic theories of the extreme importance of the maximum production of wealth and of the desirability of giving a perfectly free hand to the industrial *entrepreneur*.

(7) The last feature with regard to the condition of the pauper apprentice which we must note, is the deplorably insanitary conditions under which the apprentices lived and were housed. Suitable accommodation would have used up capital which was badly wanted in order to set up the maximum number of machines. The general condition of knowledge of hygiene was still very primitive, and, needless to say, the germ theory, or even the theory of the preventability of disease, was not yet heard of. Various contagious fevers if, by chance, introduced into a factory, had an excellent nidus for their development, and at times they spread to the neighbouring population.

The First Agitation for Reform

It was by this rude reminder of nature of the fact of human solidarity, that public opinion became convinced that the spinning factories sheltered intolerable evils; and it was under the leadership of the medical profession that the first steps towards regulation were made.

In 1784, after an outbreak of fever at Radcliffe, the Manchester magistrates resolved that they would refuse to allow the indentures of parish apprentices to employers who worked children by night or more than ten hours a day. In 1796 an association of medical men in the neighbourhood of Manchester, called the "Manchester Board of Health," passed the following resolutions, which are of extreme interest as showing a point of view in relation to industry which is diametrically opposed to those which we have indicated above, but which has gradually exercised more and more influence in subsequent time—

(1) "Children who work in the large cotton factories are peculiarly disposed to be affected by the contagion of fever, and when such infection is received it is rapidly propagated.

(2) "The large factories are generally injurious to the constitution of those employed in them, even when no particular diseases prevail, from the close confinement which is enjoined, from the debilitating effects of hot and impure air and from the want of the active exercise which nature points out as essential in childhood and youth to invigorate the system.

(3) "The untimely labour of the night and the protracted labour of the day, with respect to children, not only tends to diminish future expectations as to the general sum of life and industry, by impairing the strength and destroying the vital stamina of the rising generation; but it too often gives encouragement to idleness, extravagance and profligacy in the parents, who, contrary to the order of nature, subsist by the oppression of their offspring.

(4) "It appears that the children employed in factories are generally debarred from all opportunities of education, and from moral and religious instruction.

(5) "From the excellent regulations which subsist in several cotton factories, it appears that many of these evils may be in a considerable degree obviated; we are therefore warranted by experience, and are assured we shall have the support of the proprietors of these factories, in proposing an application for parliamentary aid (if other methods appear to be not likely to effect the purpose) to establish a general system of laws for the humane, wise and equal government of all such works."

The determination, here indicated, to apply for parliamentary aid, produced Sir Robert Peel's Act, passed in 1802, for regulating the labour of parish apprentices in

cotton factories. By this, apprentices were limited to twelve hours' work per day and were to be taught reading, writing and arithmetic. Night work was to cease by June 1804, a suit of clothing was to be supplied annually to each apprentice; factories were to be whitewashed twice a year and to be kept properly ventilated; separate sleeping apartments had to be provided for the different sexes, and not more than two apprentices were to share the same bed; children were to attend church at least once a month. In order to enforce the Act Justices of the Peace were required to appoint two inspectors out of their own number, one of whom was to be a clergyman.

After 1802 the improvement of the steam-engine created a tendency for new factories to be built in towns, particularly on the Lancashire and Yorkshire coal-fields, rather than on the hill-sides. Such factories were able to exploit the labour of the ordinary population, and particularly of the children of the hand-loom weavers, and in this way a new factory problem was created, to which further reference will be made below.

The Hand-loom Weavers

Meanwhile it is to be noted that while the condition of labour in the spinning industry was sufficiently deplorable, and its reaction upon the lot of the agricultural labourer also disastrous, the great increase in the output of yarn brought a period of greatly increased prosperity to the hand-loom weavers. On the one hand the genuine cotton industry of England was, in fact, really created by Arkwright's "water frame"; for the yarn previously spun had not been strong enough to be used for warp, so that so-called cotton goods of British manufacture consisted of linen warp and cotton weft, and the sale was prohibited of cloth consisting entirely of cotton up to the year 1774. On the other hand, the spinning machines did away with the difficulty which the weavers, whether of cotton, woollen, or linen cloth, had long been under in getting

a sufficient supply of yarn, a difficulty intensified by Kay's invention in 1733 of the fly-shuttle, which enabled much wider widths of cloth to be woven by a weaver working single-handed, and approximately doubled the speed of his work. After 1733 weavers had frequently to spend half their time hunting for yarn in order to feed their looms. Naturally the growth of the spinning factory revolutionised the relation between spinning and weaving. Weavers not only were fully employed, but they pressed their wives and children into the service. They could cheapen the selling price of their cloth, and force an ever expanding market, with but little possibility of foreign competition, as long as the great war was ravaging in the most advanced countries of Europe. It is true that in 1782 Cartwright invented the power-loom, incited thereby by the difficulty which was pointed out to him of disposing of the great quantities of machine-spun yarn because there were not weavers enough to use it up. But the power-loom only very slowly came into use, and as late as 1813 there were scarcely more than 2000 power-looms in use, while in the following twenty years the numbers increased to 100,000.

In 1815 the hand-loom weavers had had some forty years of great though fluctuating prosperity. Compared with the agricultural labourers, or even with other urban craftsmen, they were distinguished by intelligence, sobriety and public spirit. Their occupation was entirely one for adult men, as while women or youths could work the older form of loom, it took a man to weave with the fly-shuttle. But in 1815 the hand-loom weaver was at the end of his time of prosperity, and at the beginning of a long period of agony, during which his craft was all but crushed out by the superior cheapness and efficiency of the power-loom.

In future chapters some account will be given of the conditions of sanitation and of government under which the great manufacturing towns of England were beginning to grow. But we may in passing note Patrick Colquhoun's

account of the manner in which the trade of the river Thames was carried on before the establishment of the river police in 1798. The effect of the working of the Customs regulations was to concentrate on London the commerce both with the East and the West Indies; and Colquhoun estimates the imports and exports of the Port of London at the enormous figures of £30,900,000 and £29,600,000 respectively. The depredations he calculated at half a million annually, and the different sorts of depredators he divides into nine classes—

(1) The River Pirates, who came armed and boarded ships by night; (2) Night Plunderers, who worked by connivance with Night Watchmen and plundered the unwatched lighters pointed out to them; (3) Light Horsemen, who formed a connecting link between mates of West India ships and receivers on shore, and who boarded ships by night with black bags, and took so much sugar from each hogshead or so much coffee from each package, and carried jiggers—small pumps with which to extract a contribution from barrels of rum; (4) Heavy Horsemen, Lumpers who wore special gowns, inside waistcoats full of pockets, or long bags that went inside their trousers; (5) Game Watermen; (6) Game Lightermen; (7) Game Revenue Officers; (8) Scuffle Hunters, loafers on the look-out for any small prey to be had; and (9) Copemen or Receivers.

Much light is thrown on the internal history of our towns during the eighteenth century by Mr. and Mrs. Webb's *History of Local Government in England*. Broadly speaking, we may say that the record is one of widely-spread corruption and misrule, amid which many public-spirited men struggled gallantly for purity, good administration and order in their respective boroughs and parishes. The struggle was long and doubtful, meeting with varying success in different localities, with perhaps, on the whole, a net movement towards improvement. But what is most

characteristic of the whole period is the fact that the local reformers had everywhere to rely upon their own exertions without assistance from the Central Government; and that the chief influence of Parliament upon local government was the corruption spread by the traffic in seats organised by the borough-mongers.

CHAPTER IV

THE AWAKENING OF THE SPIRIT OF REFORM

"An old, mad, blind, despised and dying king,—
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
Through public scorn, mud from a muddy spring,—
Rulers who neither see nor feel nor know,
But leechlike to their fainting country cling,
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow,—
A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field,—
An army, which liberticide and prey
Make us a two-edged sword to all who wield,—
Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay,—
Religion Christless, Godless, a book sealed,
A Senate—Time's worst Statute unrepealed,
Are graves from which a glorious phantom may
Burst to illumine our tempestuous day."

SHELLEY: *England in 1819.*

Social Conditions in 1816

SHELLEY'S glorious phantom was perhaps the spirit of reform. There was indeed need for some semi-miraculous outburst of such a spirit. During the half-century before Waterloo, as we have seen, industrial changes had been proceeding with a rapidity previously unknown. During this period the Government had been monopolised by the most conservative class, and the class last to be affected by the sufferings of the poor. To an increasing degree the actual rulers of the State had been paralysed in any remedial action they might have taken by the doctrine of *laisser-faire;* and for more than half of this period war had engrossed the energies which might otherwise have been available for internal reform. It is notable that, while the only important step in advance which was made during the Great French War was the abolition of the Slave Trade

in 1808, this period was also marked by much oppression and reactionary legislation. Amid such an Augean stable there might be a danger that nothing would be effected because of the difficulty of deciding where to begin. As Shelley indicates, every institution of the country was mistrusted by the people, and gravely deserved their mistrust. The Prince Regent, who exercised the kingly power, was openly jeered at, even in moderate papers, for his selfish extravagance and heartless sensuality. The prestige of the Government was seriously damaged by the long list of pensions and sinecures maintained out of taxes wrung with difficulty from the people. The administration of justice varied from county to county, and from town to town. It reached the very lowest level in the metropolitan districts of Middlesex and Surrey, where the trading justices developed the arts of corruption to an extent which has scarcely been paralleled since in America. The Criminal Code administered by these justices is truly described by Shelley as a body of "golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay." Over two hundred different offences were felonies, for which the death penalty could be inflicted. The list had been growing through the eighteenth century. Once Burke declared that though he had singularly little influence with the Government, even his would suffice to secure a new felony without benefit of clergy, if he chose to exert it to that end. An extraordinarily inefficient parochial and borough police system was supplemented by a special body of "Bow Street Runners," and both bodies were stimulated to activity by a system of rewards reaching £40 and a Tyburn ticket for a conviction for a felony. Under this system the most remunerative results were obtained by nursing the young criminal until he became a "forty-pounder." Juries were induced to acquiesce in this system by the practice of remitting the death penalty in about nine cases out of ten in which the death sentence was pronounced. But even then it appears that more executions took place in England

in any one year than in the whole of the continent of Europe. Transportation, imprisonment in the hulks, and imprisonment in the various local prisons throughout the country, were the lighter sentences reserved for a great majority of the condemned felons; and the prisons were still, in spite of John Howard's campaign for reform, horrible dens of disorder and disease. The army was kept in a certain condition of discipline by the brutalising method of constant floggings. In spite of new efforts and the organisation of the British and Foreign School Society and the National Society, the great mass of the people could neither read nor write. The Poor Law did generally protect the population against starvation, but it did so at the cost of progressively demoralising them. Such was the relation between the State and the people in 1816.

State of Opinion

If we turn to consider what were the forces available for national reformation we find them at first no organised body, but a heterogeneous medley. The Tory Party had practically monopolised political power for a generation; and it had been profoundly modified and to some extent liberalised by this continued responsibility. It had been unanimous in support of the prosecution of the war, while the Whig Party had been divided, and to its unanimity on this point it was indebted for its continuance in power. It was now unanimous in its resistance to the demand for alteration of the Constitution and reform of Parliament.

But within the Tory party there were two great dividing issues of such importance that the party itself may be said to have consisted of two sections: Reactionaries and Progressives. There was the question with regard to the attitude of England towards the struggles of continental peoples for more representative and more democratic government. Castlereagh, perhaps unjustly, was considered to be a staunch supporter of the Holy Alliance and of Continental Absolutism. Canning, on the other

hand, was the leader of those who would have thrown the weight of British influence on the side of the revolted colonies of Spain and South America, of the Spanish and Italian Liberals, temporarily successful in extorting grants of constitutions, and of the Greek revolt against Turkish misrule.

The other dividing issue was that of Catholic Emancipation, and on this question the dividing line cut through the party in very much the same way as the division with regard to foreign policy. Those Tories, again, who took the more liberal view on these two important questions, were also disposed to be more ready to accept lines of policy in relation to trade in accordance with the expert economic opinion of the time, while those whom I term the Reactionary Tories were disposed to favour high protection and the subordination of other interests to those of land. The two sections of the Tory Party were held together by the personal influence of the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, until his retirement in 1827.

The Whig Party, perhaps even more aristocratic in its recent traditions than the Tory Party, was divided and distracted. But it was more in touch than the Tory Party with the growing intellectual and spiritual movements which were destined to make English history.

First among these should, I think, be placed the Evangelical movement. Starting from the preaching of the creators of Methodism in the middle of the eighteenth century, Evangelicalism had by the end of the century strongly permeated the Church of England. The social and political force of Evangelicalism sprang from its recognition of the inestimable value of every human soul, for whom existence in this world was regarded as the brief opportunity for determining its fate either of everlasting peace or of everlasting torment. This view of life did not make the Evangelical heedless of material conditions, but rather the more zealous to sweep away the obstacles created by poverty and ignorance to the finding of individual

salvation. It was this doctrine and this feeling that made Wilberforce and Thomas Fowell Buxton the leaders in succession of the struggle against the Slave Trade and the struggle against Slavery; that made Mrs. Fry the great reformer of prisons; and Joseph Lancaster the pioneer of the movement for popular elementary education.

Curiously associated very often with the Evangelicals were a body of Freethinkers and others, who derived their inspiration from the movement of thought which is associated with the American Rebellion and the French Revolution. What may be called the Edinburgh school of educationalists, led by Henry Brougham and Dr. Birkbeck, to which we owe the Birkbeck Institute in London, Mechanics' Institutions in various towns, and the general movement for education by evening lectures and cheap scientific publications, had its ultimate inspiration from France; while the ideal of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity was the motive power for many obscure Radicals in the workshops of the cities, who supplied the non-commissioned officers of the army of progress. We can, indeed, trace these ideas further back to the "Levellers" and "Diggers" of the Great Rebellion, since whose time a sort of underground stream of Radicalism has flowed through the generations of city life, and particularly in London. Various important movements, like the Anti-Slavery movement, and the movement for the reform of the Criminal Code, led first by Sir Samuel Romilly and then by Sir James Mackintosh, were recruited mainly from adherents of these two schools.

Even more important were the schools of Philosophic Radicalism, and of *laisser-faire* Economics, founded respectively by Jeremy Bentham and by Adam Smith, Ricardo and Malthus, the two being very closely allied, and possessing common representatives in James and John Stuart Mill and Francis Place. Holding that the test of rightness of conduct was the net result in happiness to all persons affected; holding further that the individual man was governed by two master passions, the pursuit of his

own happiness and the avoidance of his own pain; the Benthamite utilitarians drew the inference that all classes of the population required an equal share of political power in order to secure that their individual happiness should be justly allowed for in the determination of common action. Hence they naturally took the lead in the philosophical defence of political democracy and also in the working out of the actual details of political reform, by which the State might approximate towards democracy. Their political doctrine, though based upon a psychology which has since been exploded, is still sufficiently important on account of the large measure of practical truth embodied in it, and because of its ready appeal to the mind of the multitude.

The political economists of the *laisser-faire* school had already attained the zenith of their influence in some directions, while only beginning to be effective in other directions. For the most part their theories were singularly clear cut, capable of being dogmatically expressed and of pointing towards definite lines of practical policy.

The doctrine of *laisser-faire* may be expressed as three prohibitions—

(1) The State shall not interfere between employer and employed.

(2) It shall not interfere between buyer and seller within the country.

(3) It shall place no hindrance in the free development of foreign trade.

The first of these prohibitions was pretty faithfully observed before the year of Waterloo. Except for the 1802 Act, applying only to parish apprentices, the Statute book had been free from laws for the protection of the workman. Similarly with regard to the second of the three prohibitions; the old regulations for securing fair dealing between trader and buyer had been practically reduced to non-existence. But the great battle was still to be fought

for freedom of foreign trade, and in this field the principle of *laisser-faire* did not finally triumph until 1846.

The Malthusian theory that population continually tends to outstrip subsistence, universally held by the Economists, also carried with it its prohibitions, and it, too, was destined to control English policy through the enactment and administration of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.

Each of the above schools of thought exercised a certain amount of influence upon men of the leisured, propertied and educated classes. If we turn to the masses of the population no doubt the strongest influence was the somewhat erratic genius of Cobbett, who can be classed under no school, but who blended a vigorous advocacy of thorough-going parliamentary reform and denunciation of the Corn Laws with violent hatred of Malthusian philosophy and an ultra Tory love of old rural customs and habits. Yet withal he was equally warm-hearted and sincere, whether denouncing the Tory politicians or the Radical philosophers, and, no doubt, more representative of the heart of the plain Englishman than any other contemporary thinker or political leader. With him acted "Orator Hunt," who had the unenviable reputation of loving to stir mobs with seditious language, but of being very careful of his own person; Major Cartwright, who represented the tradition of the reformers of 1780; Samuel Bamford, whose biography is a well-known and valuable contemporary record; and many others.

The most effective of the Radical politicians, however, was Francis Place, the tailor, of Charing Cross. He had but little respect for Cobbett, or Hunt, or Cartwright, but by his skilful organisation of the democratic party in Westminster he was generally successful in supplying the advocates of thorough-going reform with two spokesmen in Parliament, at this time Sir Francis Burdett and Lord Cochrane.

The working-men reformers had two main centres of activity, London and Lancashire. Though "Hampden

Clubs," which advocated Parliamentary Reform, were established widely over the country, the main strength of the movement lay with the skilled artisans of London and the hand-loom weavers of Lancashire and other textile districts.

Stirrings of the People

From 1816 to 1820 a very unequal struggle was waged between the Government and the working-class reformers, from which the Whigs and the middle classes generally held aloof. Some futile rioting took place in London in December 1816. This was followed by a secret inquiry by Committees of both Houses into the disaffection of the people and by the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Then came the proposed "March of the Blanketeers" from Manchester. Every man was to carry provisions and a blanket in order to be able to bivouac on the roadside. This effort was a dismal failure. The weather was very bad, and all organisation was prevented by the Manchester police. The demonstrators who actually started straggled out of the city by various ways, and it was not long before the last of those who persisted on the march turned back. This, again, was followed by an Act to prevent seditious meetings, and a circular from Lord Sidmouth, the Home Secretary, to the Lord-Lieutenants, authorising magistrates to apprehend persons accused of libellous publications.

In June 1817 what is known as the Derbyshire revolt took place. Brandreth, a pauper in receipt of parish relief, assembled 500 men, who armed themselves forcibly, and himself shot dead a man who ventured to oppose his party. His band marched on Nottingham, but the Yeomanry were assembled in overwhelming force, and scattered the men, arresting their leaders. Brandreth, with two of his associates, was executed.

Some attempt at remedial action by the Government was made, combined with repression and a vigorous employment of spies by the Home Secretary. In the beginning of 1817 the sum of three-quarters of a million was granted

for the assistance of public works and the encouragement of fisheries in order to increase employment for the poor, half a million to be spent in England and a quarter of a million in Ireland. An Act was further passed to facilitate the establishment of savings banks. Meanwhile the repressive laws were generating a spirit of resistance, which expressed itself by refusals of juries to convict men prosecuted under them. In December the prestige of the Government suffered severely by the failure of its prosecution of William Hone, a small publisher who had published political parodies of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Litany and the Catechism. Three times he was prosecuted by the Attorney-General, on two occasions before Lord Ellenborough, the Chief Justice of England, and a special jury, and on each occasion he was acquitted by the jury, in spite of all the exertions of the judge, amid the applause of the public.

In 1818 there was somewhat of a lull in political agitation. A partial revival of trade diminished the tension, and the suspension of Habeas Corpus was allowed to end. But in 1819 trade again became extremely depressed, while food prices remained extremely high. The depression was aggravated by the ignorance of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Vansittart, who actually raised the duty on foreign wool from 6*s*. 8*d*. to 56*s*. per cwt. Even before this unemployment was so rife that the Government obtained a vote of £50,000 for assisting emigration to the Cape. As was inevitable at a time when the power-loom was rapidly making its way, the hand-loom weavers suffered terribly. In Ayrshire it was calculated that the utmost a man could earn in a week was 2*s*. 7*d*., working from fourteen to sixteen hours a day. Both cotton and wool shared in the depression, and numbers of colliers in the Black Country were also thrown out of employment.

In May Sir Francis Burdett moved in the House of Commons that the House should take the subject of representation into serious consideration at the commencement

of the next Session, urging that the reform of Parliament was a necessary preliminary to more economical administration. Fifty-eight votes were given for the resolution and 153 against. Huge reform meetings followed this declaration against Reform from the House of Commons. A great meeting was planned for August 16, on some vacant building land, called St. Peter's Field, at Manchester. It was here that the Blanketeers had met in 1817. From all the districts round the reformers arranged to march hither; and in order that their demonstration might be as imposing as possible they spent the evenings before in drilling and in preparing banners. Vast multitudes of men marched on the appointed day into St. Peter's Field.

The Manchester magistrates were alarmed. They collected considerable bodies of special constables and of Yeomanry, together with a troop of Hussars. After the meeting had actually begun, they took the extraordinary step of ordering the Chief Constable to arrest the speakers then and there. The constable could not penetrate the crowd, the Yeomanry were called upon to make a way for him, but they became scattered, and the people prevented them from reaching the wagon which served as platform. Then the Hussars were ordered to charge. At first they had little success, but presently their swords were seen flashing in the air, rising and falling, and screams rose from the people immediately beside them. The cry arose that the Hussars were killing the demonstrators; and the crowd broke into a run to allow those in danger to escape. There was terrible confusion, people fell down and were trodden on, several were killed, many were seriously injured. It is disputed to this day whether the Hussars struck with the flat or the edge of their swords, but descendants of men who were in the crowd have assured me that there is no doubt that they used the edge. In the end the speakers, Hunt and his companions, were arrested and sentenced to terms of imprisonment from one year up to two years and a half.

This was the celebrated massacre of Peterloo. The Government expressed emphatic approval of the conduct both of the magistrates and of the soldiers, but in this they completely misrepresented public opinion. Public indignation was intense. George Cruikshank's cartoon, republished in *Social England,* represents the Yeomanry on horseback charging and trampling over men and women and babies in arms, and hacking at them with bloody axes while their leader shouts, "Down with them! Shoot 'em down, my brave boys, give them no quarter! They want to take our beef and pudding from us, and remember the more you kill the less poor-rates you will have to pay. So go it, lads, show your courage and your loyalty." The Common Council of London, by 71 votes to 45, affirmed the legality of the Manchester meeting and expressed strong indignation at the action of the magistrates and military, and an address embodying the resolution was presented to the Regent. Meetings in a series of great towns called upon the Regent to dismiss the Ministers who had been connected with the massacre. Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord-Lieutenant of the West Riding, summoned a county meeting at York to consider the Manchester proceedings, and other counties followed this example.

Shelley, receiving the accounts in Italy, wrote the "Masque of Anarchy," concluding—

> "And that slaughter to the nation
> Shall steam up like inspiration
> Eloquent, oracular,
> A volcano heard afar.
>
> "Rise like lions after slumber
> In unvanquishable number
> Shake your chains to earth, like dew,
> Which in sleep have fall'n on you;
> Ye are many, they are few.
>
> "And these words shall then become
> Like Oppression's thundered doom
> Ringing through the heart and brain
> Heard again—again—again."

The Ministers resolved on a policy of repression. They dismissed Lord Fitzwilliam from the Lord-Lieutenancy of the West Riding, and summoned Parliament to pass the "Six Acts." They were, respectively, an Act to prohibit unauthorised persons from practising military exercises; an Act to alter the procedure in trials for treason and to accelerate the proceedings; a third to authorise magistrates to issue warrants for the search for arms; a fourth for the suppression of seditious and blasphemous libels, making transportation the punishment for a second conviction for libel; a fifth to restrict the right of public meetings; and a sixth to subject all publications below a certain size to the stamp duty on newspapers. These Acts were pushed through Parliament in spite of strong opposition with but little modification. The most drastic and subversive of liberty of the six was the one dealing with public meetings. It allowed county meetings called by the Lord-Lieutenant or Sheriff and meetings of corporate towns called by the Mayor, and other meetings called by five or more Justices of the Peace. But it prohibited all other meetings for political purposes, except meetings of parishioners within their own parishes. Unincorporated towns, like Manchester, Birmingham and Sheffield were directly silenced. No itinerant speakers were allowed to go from one parish meeting to another; and practically the attempt was made by this Act, in conjunction with those dealing with the Press, to muzzle all except the governing classes. By Christmas the Six Acts were passed. Perhaps the country was never at any time in the nineteenth century nearer civil war.

CHAPTER V

THE EVENTFUL REIGN OF GEORGE IV

Queen Caroline

A month after the passing of the Six Acts an event, apparently quite insignificant, created a curious diversion of public attention. On January 29, 1820, the old King George III, who for years had been hopelessly insane, died. The Prince Regent, who had been King since 1811 in reality, now became King in title also. His Queen, who had been leading a somewhat irregular life on the Continent and on the Mediterranean, having separated from her husband by mutual consent after a somewhat brief and stormy wedded life, naturally anticipated some of the honours of royalty, the recognition of her position as Queen of England in foreign courts and the mention of her name in the Prayer Book. But George IV, if not very capable of affection, at least knew how to hate. He refused to acknowledge her. In June she arrived in England to claim the dignities to which her position entitled her. She was met by a "Bill of Pains and Penalties" introduced by Lord Liverpool as Prime Minister, and underwent a trial for divorce before the House of Lords, with the Ministers of the Crown as the prosecuting counsel. At all times Divorce Court proceedings attract much more than their due share of public attention. But this was the divorce of a queen, with a king as petitioner, while every detail of the life of the respondent was ransacked to find evidence of guilt.

We need not now be concerned with the question as to

whether she had or had not actually committed adultery; nor, indeed, were the English people very much concerned with that question at the time. The immense mass was, at any rate, quite satisfied on one point—that, however bad the Queen might be, she was at least good enough for her husband. An immense multitude assembled at Dover to receive her with cheers. The Commandant gave her a royal salute. In Canterbury a torchlit crowd took the horses from her carriage, and the Mayor and Corporation waited on her with an address. All the way from Canterbury to London the enthusiasm increased with her progress. Nor was there any abatement in the partisanship of the people during the long proceedings in August, September, October and November. At last the Bill of Pains and Penalties was abandoned amid general rejoicings.

Queen Caroline died the next year, after a futile attempt to force an entrance into Westminster Abbey on the occasion of the King's coronation. But her brief career in England in 1820 and 1821 left permanent effects. Whigs and Radicals fought side by side for the Queen. Cobbett was her secret adviser as well as her open champion. Brougham took the lead in fighting her cause in the House of Commons; and even the Whig nobles voted at every step against the Bill of Pains and Penalties, whether they believed in the Queen's guilt or not. This temporary alliance produced a remarkable approximation in feeling. The Whigs became more zealous and determined in their hitherto very tepid advocacy of reform. They were warmed—perhaps intoxicated—by popular approval; they naturally felt more friendly towards Radicals, and the Radicals in turn were ready to meet them half way. The first actual triumph for the reform movement was achieved in 1821 by the disfranchisement of the corrupt borough of Grampound and the transference of its two seats to the county of Cork. At last a breach was made in the defence of the Constitution exactly as it was with all its anachronisms and anomalies.

Canning in Office

The alliance between Whigs and Radicals was destined to bear fruit later. Meanwhile, important changes were taking place within the Ministerial Party. Lord Londonderry (previously Lord Castlereagh) committed suicide in August 1822, and Canning became Foreign Secretary and began that more liberal administration of the foreign policy of the country to which reference has been made above. In the next year Vansittart retired to the House of Lords and Robinson (afterwards Lord Goderich) became Chancellor of the Exchequer. Huskisson, also, became President of the Board of Trade, and brought to the task a very different type of mind and of training to his immediate predecessor. He was, in fact, something of a financial expert, with a good knowledge of existing commercial conditions, and he was disposed to move as far as was immediately practicable in the direction of free trade. He held office for five years. During this period, partly by changes in his own department and partly by his influence on the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he made the first great breach in the protective system of the previous two centuries. In 1823 he dealt with the Navigation Acts by his Reciprocity of Duties Bill. These Acts, which had been passed in 1651, 1661 and 1662, had been aimed at the mercantile supremacy of the Dutch. They prohibited the import of goods into England or any English dominions, from Asia, Africa, America, Russia and Turkey, and, with few exceptions, any other European countries, except in English vessels or vessels belonging to the country of origin. These Acts had effected their immediate purpose, and had even been approved by Adam Smith on the ground that "Defence is more important than opulence." But in more recent years they were found to hamper trade more than they assisted the development of British shipping. Since 1815 the United States, Portugal, Holland and Prussia had struck at the system set

up by the Navigation Acts of a practical monopoly for British ships in the world's carrying trade, by levying differential duties against British ships. Huskisson's Reciprocity of Duties Bill allowed the Government to conclude reciprocity treaties by which foreign ships could be admitted into British harbours on the same terms as British ships on condition that the country to which they belonged gave equal privileges to British ships in its ports.

In subsequent years Huskisson initiated a complete change of policy with regard to customs duties. The policy had been one of absolute prohibition of import or of very high or prohibitive duties on the importation of manufactured goods, together with more moderate duties on imported raw materials. He reduced the scale of duties to approximately an average of thirty per cent. *ad valorem* on manufactured goods, and of about ten per cent. on raw materials. He allowed cotton goods to be imported at a duty of ten per cent. instead of fifty to seventy-five per cent.; woollens at fifteen per cent. and linens at twenty-five per cent. instead of at duties from three to six times as high. He halved the duties on copper and zinc and unmanufactured articles generally. The importation of silk goods had been actually prohibited; with the result that English ladies were so convinced of the superiority of the French silks, which they were not allowed to buy, that, in order to induce them to buy the native wares, merchants found it necessary to take them out to sea and smuggle them back into the country. Huskisson allowed importation of French silks at a duty of thirty per cent. *ad valorem*, with the consequence that the British silk manufacture revived, and even a flourishing export trade to France began. Similarly he cut down to a nominal figure the duty on foreign wool and removed the prohibition on the export of native wool.

The years 1820 to 1824 were a period of gradually reviving prosperity, which reached in 1825 a condition of

boom and inflation, which, in turn, brought about a panic and collapse. The winter prices of wheat fell from 79*s*. 6*d*. in January 1819 to 40*s*. 10*d*. in the same month of 1823, and then rose to 58*s*. 7*d*. in 1824, and 67*s*. 3*d*. in 1825. The falling prices produced, of course, an outcry of agricultural distress, with a renewal of the phenomena of agricultural unemployment. But the reaching of lower prices of food than had been known before for a generation, on the whole gradually alleviated the condition of the mass of the people. Meanwhile, the recognition of the independence of the revolted Spanish colonies led to a great development of export trade to South America. In 1824 business became extremely brisk, with rising prices.

Development of Trade Unions

Right through the nineteenth century we can trace a close connection between the varying condition of trade and the direction of efforts of the leaders of the working classes. At any time during the past hundred years there have been two channels between which the efforts of labour leaders have been divided—the channel of industrial organisation, mainly by means of trade unionism, and the channel of political agitation; and there has been a very uniform tendency to throw effort in times of depression of trade into the political channel, but in times of brisk trade into the industrial channel. This is, of course, perfectly natural. While trade is brisk and unemployment at a minimum, it is possible for wage-earners, with comparative ease, to spare weekly a few pence for trade union contributions, and demands for higher wages can, in a considerable proportion of cases, be enforced. But when the tide ebbs, when profits diminish and employment is restricted, a large proportion of strikes against falling wages fail, the union funds are depleted, and the man in work fears that if he drops his job there are too many eager to snatch at it for him to have much chance of reinstatement. In these circumstances hopes resting on

trade unionism decay, and men with more leisure than money turn to consider and condemn the manner in which they are governed, and unite in the demand for political reform. During the period we are now treating of, the development of trade unionism becomes more important than the course of the demand for political reform.

The general history of trade unionism may be summed up as the history of a movement towards wider and wider union of the wage-earners, but a movement in which too hasty progress towards the desired end has been continually followed by reaction. Great Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth century was still a country of undeveloped means of communication. Though the industrial towns were near together as compared with towns on the Continent, and the roads gradually improved by the passing of a great number of Turnpike Acts, the different urban centres still remained so isolated from each other that the artisan of York or Nottingham, for example, usually lived and died in his native town. Further, though, as we have seen, there had been considerable decay in the system of apprenticeship enforced by law, yet the custom continued. Hence the trade unions of the eighteenth century and the first two decades of the nineteenth century were commonly local rather than national, and unions of men in a particular craft rather than unions of labourers generally, or of all the varieties of craftsmen engaged in a particular sort of industry. Out of these small local trade-clubs which grew up, as Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb have shown, largely out of the practice of fellow-craftsmen using the same public-house as a "house of call," *i.e.* as a sort of informal employment registry, it was theoretically possible for a general combination of all workers of a particular industrial centre to be formed, as appears to be the tendency in Italy. But as a matter of fact the other possible development has been the one which has taken place in Britain. The barriers between crafts have proved more insurmountable than those of place. From the local

unions have grown up national unions, which may even have branches in distant colonies, and it is through the federation of the national unions that the organisations of labour have made such progress as has been attained towards the theoretical ideal of the national combination of all workers of all trades and crafts.

In 1824 the small trade club was still the dominating type of union; though national unions were beginning to be formed. These trade unions were banned by the law. They were regarded as being fundamentally illegal on the ground that their very object was the restraint of trade. In addition, the Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800 expressly prohibited any sort of combination of workmen. The law was freely used to checkmate strikes and to ward off the demands for better conditions. It appears that the special motive for legislation in 1799 was the new effort at combination among the textile operatives of Lancashire and Yorkshire. Prosecutions were numerous. A typical case was that of the Scottish weavers. In 1811 certain cotton weavers had been convicted of combination and imprisoned, the judge observing that the magistrates had full power to fix rates of wages. In 1812 many of the employers refused to accept the rates fixed by the justices for weaving, and all the weavers between Aberdeen and Carlyle struck to enforce the justices' rates. When a satisfactory settlement appeared imminent the Weavers' Central Committee of five was arrested by the Government and its members sentenced to terms of imprisonment varying from four to eighteen months.

Legalisation of Trade Unions

In 1824 Francis Place, now retired from business as a tailor in Charing Cross, thought that the opportunity had come for carrying out a project which he had proposed to himself during the previous ten years, the repeal of all legal restriction upon the right of combination. Through his favourite pupil, Joseph Hume, he succeeded in bringing

influence to bear upon Huskisson to secure the passage of an Act which not only repealed the laws of 1799 and 1800, but also overrode the common law presumption of the illegality of trade unionism. This was done quietly, without assistance from the workers' organisations. In fact, the Bill passed through both Houses without debate or division, as Place remarked, almost without the notice of Members within or newspapers without. Actually some Lancashire magistrates sentenced cotton weavers to imprisonment for combination some time after combination had ceased to be a crime. But as soon as men began to realise what had happened, new combinations sprang rapidly into existence and old combinations into fresh activity, to take advantage of their new position in the law and of the boom in trade. According to the *Sheffield Mercury* (October 8, 1825), almost the whole body of mechanics in the kingdom had combined in the general resolution to impose terms on their employers.

Naturally reaction followed. Shipowners, already marked by that hostility to trade unionism which has characterised them ever since, demanded a committee for inquiry into the conduct of the workmen and the effect of the Act of 1824. The shipowners themselves proposed a measure forbidding anybody to subscribe to the funds of any association whatsoever unless some magistrate approved its objects and himself became its treasurer. The Committee of Inquiry was packed with placemen and Ministerialists, Hume alone being allowed a seat to represent the point of view of the workers. But the trade unions were now fully aroused. They sent their best spokesmen to give evidence and to lobby personally every member of the Committee, and these were effectively coached by Francis Place. The shipowners were virtually defeated, and the Act of 1825, while repealing that of 1824, did nevertheless allow combinations to exist for the purpose of raising wages and shortening hours of labour.

Effect of Legalisation

From a point of view of political and economic thinkers of the time the significance of the repeal of the Combination Law lay in the fact that it removed one of the surviving restrictions upon the liberty of men to pursue their own economic interests according to their own judgment. They grouped it with the repeal of the Spitalfields Acts which regulated the manufacture of silk, as carried on in the East of London, by authorising magistrates of London, Middlesex and Westminster to fix the wages of silk weavers. This was carried through the House of Commons in 1823, and, though thrown out by the House of Lords in that year, was finally passed in 1824. Similar measures carried on Hume's initiative in 1824 were the repeal of the laws prohibiting the emigration of artisans and the exportation of machinery.

The trade unionists themselves looked at the matter with different eyes. They were disposed, perhaps, to overestimate the immediate advantage that accrued to them by the partial legalisation of their combinations in 1825. They had suffered so much from the paralysing of their activities by the imprisonment of their leaders that they scarcely realised how strong were the purely economic difficulties in the way of their efforts to raise wages and improve the conditions of labour. Francis Place himself, indeed, in no way underestimated these difficulties. Holding firmly by the creed of the economic school with which he was associated, he had no faith at all in the power of trade unions to modify the working of the laws of the distribution of wealth. But he thought that as long as trade unions were illegal the workmen would believe combination was a powerful weapon which the law unjustly withheld from them. To legalise combination would, therefore, give the men a chance of finding out that it was futile, and induce them to turn to more effective ways, such as the restriction of births, of improving their con-

dition. He also considered that the Combination Laws were a perfectly unnecessary irritant in the relations between employer and employed.

Though, ultimately, the views of the workers were proved to be sound, the immediate future consequences did not appear to justify them. The first few months of 1825 were a period of rising prices and rather extraordinary speculation. There was a boom closely resembling that at the time of the South Sea Bubble, and caused very largely by a parallel circumstance—the opening out of a new field for British export trade in South America. Promotions nearly as wild as those of a hundred years before were rushed upon the money market and readily attracted gullible investors. Harriet Martineau gives as typical examples the Quicksilver Fixation Company and the Company for drafting Scotch milkmaids to the Argentine, where the people used oil instead of butter, and the cows were too wild to be milked. The crash came on December 5, when the banking house of Pole & Co. closed its doors. On the following day three more bankers of high reputation failed, and then the panic began which destroyed even many sound firms and imperilled the Bank of England itself. In the depression of trade which followed this crash the trade unions which had been hurried into existence or into larger growth by the prosperity and hopes of 1824 and 1825 had a very disastrous time. It was some years before they began to recover, and then they developed new tactics and entered into a new phase in their history.

The Parliament which had been summoned in 1820, on the death of George III, was dissolved in 1826 amid circumstances not much less gloomy than those which had seen its beginning. Most miserable of all was the condition of the hand-loom weavers, to whom every fluctuation of trade was, as it were, a fresh turn of the screw to compel them to abandon their craft in despair. In the depression of 1826 there were widespread but, it is needless to say, futile riots to destroy the power looms.

Catholic Emancipation

The next Parliament was to prove the most eventful one in the long period of Tory ascendancy. Early in 1827 Lord Liverpool, the Prime Minister, resigned in consequence of illness. Canning became Prime Minister and was joined by some of the Whigs, while the Duke of Wellington, Peel and Lord Eldon retired. His Ministry lasted but a few months, during which, however, the Treaty of London, between England, France and Russia, for the pacification of Greece, was signed. Canning's death on August 8 was shortly afterwards followed by the battle of Navarino, which secured the independence of a part of Greece. After various Ministerial changes the Duke of Wellington became Prime Minister in 1828, with Peel as Home Secretary, Huskisson as Colonial and War Secretary and Palmerston as Secretary at War. The supposed leaders of the reactionary Tories were thus in office. They were by no means effectively in a position of power. Lord John Russell (February 26, 1828) carried against the Government, by 237 votes to 193, a motion for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, which confined offices in the national service and in that of municipal boroughs to members of the Church of England. Some further progress was also made in the disfranchisement of rotten boroughs. But the great issue before Parliament was Catholic Emancipation.

In 1823, at a time when all Ireland was in a condition of veiled civil war, Protestants organising themselves as Peep-o'-day Boys and Catholics as Defenders, Protestants in Orange Lodges and Roman Catholics becoming Ribbonmen, a small body of Roman Catholics met in Dublin and formed themselves into a Catholic Association under the leadership of Daniel O'Connell. The Association rapidly increased its influence and exerted it with great discretion. On the one hand it urged the Catholics to abstain from all illegal acts and from joining any illegal societies; on

the other hand it prosecuted Protestants who were guilty of violence against Catholics. Throughout the country it levied the so-called "Catholic rent" on the parishes. Its very moderation and the power it showed of suppressing violence all the more increased the alarm of the Government. O'Connell did indeed use words which might be interpreted as suggesting a possible future rebellion—"If Parliament will not attend to the Roman Catholic claims, I hope another Bolivar will arise to vindicate their rights;" and, again, "Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow." For these utterances he was prosecuted by the Government, but the Grand Jury threw out the Bill. In 1825 the Government passed a measure for the suppression of the Association, making every society in Ireland for the redress of grievances in Church or State, which renewed its meetings for more than fourteen days, illegal. But it was easily evaded. The Catholic Association dissolved itself, and its members formed a new association "for education and other charitable purposes." The Catholic rent was still collected. Under the pressure of this effective organisation a Catholic Relief Bill passed the House of Commons in May. But, led by the Duke of York, the King's younger brother and the expected heir to the Throne, the House of Lords threw out the Relief Bill amid great rejoicings from intolerant Protestants.

The Forty-shilling Freeholder

The General Election of 1826 followed quickly after this repulse, and O'Connell resolved to make a striking demonstration of the determination of the Irish peasantry. From 1727 to 1793 Catholics had been excluded from the franchise in Ireland, where, as in England, the county vote depended on the ownership of a 40*s.* freehold. In 1793 the Irish Parliament, which had secured practical independence the year before, under the leadership of Grattan, conferred the franchise on Catholics. The greater powers of the Irish Parliament naturally increased the desire of

the land-owners for parliamentary influence. Forty-shilling freeholders were multiplied enormously for electoral purposes, but these nominal freeholders remained as completely dependent for a subsistence on the goodwill of the landlords as before. A man might, for example, be given the nominal ownership of his hovel, estimated value 10*d.* per week; but he remained a tenant-at-will of the land he tilled, without which he must starve. Vivid descriptions are given by Lever as to the way in which the landlords marched to the poll at the head of their tenants armed with blackthorns; and, naturally, voting being open, every tenant voted as his landlord bade him. O'Connell chose Waterford for his demonstration. This county was almost entirely the property of the Beresfords, and Lord George Beresford, the sitting member, appeared to have the representation securely in his hands. The Catholic Association supported another candidate against him, and even the Beresford tenants voted against their member, so that he had to retire from the contest. The 40*s.* freeholders had placed themselves in peril of starvation at the bidding of the Association. The Government had to calculate that they might be equally ready to face death by the bullet; and that, should a rising in Ireland take place, the troops at the service of the Government consisted to a very large extent of Catholic Irish.

During the two years of rapid Ministerial changes that followed the General Election of 1826 there was no opportunity of striking another effective blow. By that time Canning had died, the short-lived Goderich Administration had come and gone, and the Duke of Wellington had become Prime Minister. A display of independence on the part of Huskisson produced a quarrel between him and the Duke, and Huskisson resigned office. Mr. Vesey Fitz-Gerald, Member for Clare, was appointed President of the Board of Trade. He had to seek re-election from his constituency. This was considered a light matter, for Clare had never failed to follow the lead of its landlords, and

every landlord was prepared to support FitzGerald. O'Connell determined to repeat the Waterford demonstration in an even more striking manner. Though a Catholic, and therefore unable to sit in Parliament, he offered himself as a candidate. Again the 40*s*. freeholders marched in from their hovels on the mountain side to Ennis, the county town, but this time behind their priests instead of behind their landlords. FitzGerald's case was hopeless, and after five days he retired from the contest, declaring "The country is mad."

The enthusiasm spread to the constabulary and the troops. In the South the Catholics armed and drilled, and made their public meetings almost into military demonstrations. The Act against Associations passed in 1825 had been enacted for three years only, and the three years now expired. Ulster Protestants prepared for civil war, and here the danger seemed imminent. Then O'Connell gave a third demonstration of the effectiveness of the discipline which he had instilled in the Catholics. At the end of September 1828 he issued an address directing the people to discontinue holding meetings, and his order was scrupulously obeyed.

At last, after long and anxious debate, the Duke of Wellington's Cabinet, prompted by Peel and by Lord Anglesey, the Lord-Lieutenant, resolved upon granting the demand for Catholic Emancipation. Much against his will, King George IV was induced to acquiesce. The secret was published on February 4, 1829, in the advance reports of the King's Speech. All the rights of citizens were thrown open to Catholics, except that they were barred from the Throne, the Lord Chancellorship and the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland. But, on the other hand, the Catholic Association was once more dissolved, this time effectively, and the 40*s*. freeholders were deprived of the franchise, the qualification for an Irish county elector being now fixed at £10 per annum.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST REFORM ACT

The French and Belgian Revolutions

On June 26, 1830, George IV died. Parliament was dissolved on July 24. It was a time of growing political excitement in England. The last memorable event of the dissolved Parliament had been the rejection of a proposal of Lord John Russell, the Whig leader, to enfranchise Leeds, Birmingham and Manchester. In Birmingham a new association, the Birmingham Political Union, originally formed for the purpose of advocating the free use of paper money, had postponed its original object in order first to carry Parliamentary Reform. Thomas Attwood was the leader of this movement, and he was working in close association with Francis Place and the Westminster Radicals. The rapidity with which this body grew, and the influence it exerted, appeared to Conservatives to bear a most disquieting similarity to the record of the Catholic Association. Meanwhile events were occurring across the Channel which stirred the friends of constitutional government into enthusiasm. On July 27 a revolution broke out in Paris. Within a few days King Charles X, who had been placed upon the throne by the Allied Powers of Europe, was compelled to abdicate, and on August 7, Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, was proclaimed King of the French. At the same time the people of Belgium, who had been put under the rule of the King of Holland, also rebelled and succeeded in establishing their independence. The success with which the principle of the right of a

people to determine the nature of its own government had been established both in France and in Belgium, with but very little bloodshed, had the effect of rousing a common enthusiasm among Whigs and Radicals in England. Between these there now was effected a partial fusion, and the Liberal Party of the nineteenth century was the result. Meanwhile the Tory Party was torn by dissension. It had lost faith in its leaders, and had followed the statesmen who had emancipated the Catholics mutinously and without enthusiasm. In the election the Liberal candidates had a series of remarkable successes in the big constituencies, but still the Tory Party had a nominal majority in the House of Commons, and the Duke of Wellington remained Prime Minister.

In a very curious way the issues of Home and Foreign politics were blended. The King's Speech deplored the events in Belgium, and it was feared that war was contemplated in order to re-establish Dutch rule. Earl Grey called upon the House of Lords to prevent the danger of war by reforming Parliament. On the other hand the Duke of Wellington made his historic declaration in favour of the Constitution as it was, declaring that if he "had the task of creating a new Constitution he could not hope to create such perfection at once, but his great endeavour would be to form some description of Legislature which would produce the same results." Next day the Funds fell from 84 to 80. This was on November 3.

When the 9th of November came the Ministers feared to allow the King and Queen to attend the Lord Mayor's Banquet. The danger feared was only partially connected with the agitation for reform. The main cause for excitement was the unpopularity of the new force of Metropolitan Police that had just been created by Sir Robert Peel, as a necessary part of the policy of reform of the Criminal Law. Peel had, in fact, taken up the work begun by Sir Samuel Romilly of substituting for the barbarous plan of nominal death penalties for innumerable offences moderate

penalties which could actually be carried out, combined with an efficient police. The new police, however, were still very unpopular.

The Whig Ministry

On November 15 the Ministry was defeated in the House of Commons and resigned. Earl Grey, leader of the Whigs in the House of Lords, was induced to undertake the task of forming a Cabinet. It was a Ministry partly of Whigs and partly of Canningites. Lord Althorp, the heir to a peerage, was Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Melbourne Home Secretary, Lord Palmerston, an Irish Peer sitting in the House of Commons, Foreign Secretary, the other chief members being Lord Russell, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Durham, Lord Goderich and Sir J. Graham. It was perhaps the most aristocratic Cabinet of the nineteenth century. The great difficulty in its formation was Henry Brougham, the one prominent man associated with the Whig Party who had displayed the qualities of a popular leader. He had been elected with enthusiasm by the freeholders of Yorkshire without even visiting the county. It was determined to exile him from the House of Commons, and he was made a Peer and given the Woolsack. There he ceased in effect to be a political influence, and busied himself in wiping off the great accumulation of appeals which had been left to him by his predecessors.

The First Reform Bill

Such was the Cabinet which had to deal with the great problem of drafting a Reform Bill sufficiently bold and comprehensive to win the enthusiasm of the more advanced reformers, and yet mild enough to secure the endorsement of a sufficient body of moderate opinion. In this effort they were extraordinarily successful. The essence of their proposals was that a uniform system based on intelligible principles should be established by law for the whole nation, in the place of a medley of local customs.

In the unreformed House of Commons the counties had but two representatives each, except Yorkshire, which had recently gained two by the disfranchisement of the corrupt borough of Grampound. On the other hand 205 English parliamentary boroughs returned two members each, selecting them according to their local constitutions. There were fifty-nine boroughs where the franchise was exercised by all who paid poor rate or church rate (scot and lot boroughs), or by those who, not being in receipt of poor relief, possessed a hearth where they could boil a pot, and a doorway where they could control ingress or egress (pot-walloper boroughs). In thirty-nine "Burgage Boroughs" the owners and occupiers of certain ancient tenements exclusively exercised the franchise—these were specially easy to control. In sixty-two the Freemen of the Borough were the parliamentary voters. In forty-three the Corporation, whether elected, or, more usually, self-elected, disposed of the representation as it chose.

For two centuries local struggles had been carried on between the partisans of a wide and of a restricted franchise within the boroughs. The Bill proposed to give the franchise everywhere to £10 householders. It thus made the struggle for a wide franchise a national instead of a local one.

The Royal power, acting under varying motives in different times, had determined which places were to be Parliamentary Boroughs. Some boroughs had decayed, many had always been insignificant, while great towns like Manchester and Birmingham had no representation apart from the counties in which they were situated. The Bill proposed to disfranchise the insignificant boroughs and to enfranchise the great towns. It thus struck a blow at the system by which Borough representation was controlled by Patrons and Borough-mongers.

The Reform Bill was drafted by a Committee of the Cabinet, and introduced by Lord John Russell, who had fought actively for small instalments of reform during the

past ten years. It was received with enthusiasm by the Radicals, with scoffing laughter by the Tories. A fierce debate took place on the second reading, followed by one of the most exciting divisions ever known in the House of Commons. Lord Macaulay's letters contain the following vivid description—

> "Such a scene as the division of last Tuesday I never saw, and never expect to see again. If I should live fifty years, the impression of it will be as fresh and sharp in my mind as if it had just taken place. It was like seeing Cæsar stabbed in the Senate House, or seeing Oliver taking the mace from the table; a sight to be seen only once and never forgotten. The crowd overflowed the House in every part. When the strangers were cleared out, and the doors locked, we had six hundred and eight members present—more by fifty-five than ever were in a division before. The Ayes and Noes were like two volleys of cannon from opposite sides of a field of battle. When the opposition went out into the lobby, an operation which took up twenty minutes or more, we spread ourselves over the benches on both sides of the House: for there had been many of us who had not been able to find a seat during the evening. When the doors were shut we were able to speculate on our numbers. . . .
>
> "As the tellers passed along our lowest row on the left-hand side the interest was insupportable—two hundred and ninety-one—two hundred and ninety-two —we were all standing up and stretching forward, telling with the tellers. At three hundred there was a short cry of joy—at three hundred and two another —suppressed, however, in a moment: for we did not yet know what the hostile force might be. We knew, however, that we could not be severely beaten. The doors were thrown open and in they came. Each of them as he entered, brought some different report of

their numbers. It must have been impossible, as you may conceive, in the lobby, crowded as they were, to form any exact estimate. First we heard that they were three hundred and three, then that number rose to three hundred and ten; then went down to three hundred and seven. Alexander Barry told me that he had counted, and that they were three hundred and four. We were all breathless with anxiety, when Charles Wood, who stood near the door, jumped upon a bench and cried out, 'They are only three hundred and one.' We set up a shout that you might have heard to Charing Cross, waving our hats, stamping about the floor, and clapping our hands. The tellers scarcely got through the crowd: for the House was thronged up to the tables, and all the floor was fluctuating with heads like the pit of a theatre. But you might have heard a pin drop as Duncannon read the numbers. Then again the shouts broke out, and many of us shed tears. I could scarcely refrain. And the jaw of Peel feel; and the face of Twiss was as the face of a damned soul; and Herries looked like Judas taking his necktie off for the last operation."

The Dry Election

Soon after the Ministry was defeated by 299 votes to 291 on the question of going into Committee, and a new crisis arose. It was known that the Cabinet wanted a dissolution, the Opposition was determined, if possible, to prevent it. Confident in their power, they refused supplies, hoping that the King would refuse to consent to a dissolution and that the Ministry would be obliged to resign. The King, however, held by his Ministers, and preparation was made for a dissolution by commission. Lord Wharncliffe gave notice in the House of Lords of a motion for an address to the Crown against the dissolution. This necessitated the King acting in person. The Ministers drove to Buckingham Palace and stated the case to King William.

He was roused by the attack on the prerogative, and when officials of the Household put every trumpery difficulty possible in his way, he declared that if his carriage could not be got ready he would go in a hackney coach. Lord Wharncliffe was moving his motion when the King arrived amid shouts of "The King," uproar, noble fists shaken in the faces of noble lords—all but actual fighting. A similar scene took place in the House of Commons when the members were summoned into the Peers' chamber. Peel was speaking in denunciation of the dissolution, and refused to cease until he was forcibly pulled by his coat-tails into his seat.

The election of 1831 which followed is known as the Dry Election. In the days of prolonged and open voting, when the qualification of the voter was examined on the hustings before he openly gave his vote, it was a part of the regular business of an election agent to secure the continued presence of a body of violent partisans, whether voters or non-voters, in front of the hustings, throughout the election. The regular method of securing the necessary fervour and party enthusiasm was the hiring of adjacent public-houses. But in the Dry Election it was not necessary for the supporters to do this, and it was futile for the opponents. The cry throughout the country was "The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill." This represented the common determination of moderates and of advanced men to sink their differences in order that an actual result might be then and there achieved.

The second Reform Bill was introduced on June 24, 1831, and differed but little from the first. The second reading was carried by a majority of 136. The Opposition delayed progress as much as possible amid the growing impatience of the country, and it was not till the 22nd of September that it reached the House of Lords. On October 3 the Peers rejected the second reading by 199 votes to 158. Demonstrations of protest took place in many towns. Nottingham Castle was burnt down. A

meeting said to have been attended by 150,000 pesons was held in Birmingham and resolutions were passed that no taxes should be paid unless the Reform Bill was passed. Parliament was prorogued.

Meanwhile Attwood's Political Union in Birmingham was made a model for similar organisations elsewhere, affiliated together in a National Political Union, with its headquarters in London. The situation became more dangerous. Riots became more numerous, and on October 13, the entry of the Recorder of Bristol into that city was the signal for three days of anarchy. The Mansion House was sacked; the mob drank the wine in the cellars, then liberated the prisoners in the old Bridewell and the new gaol and fired the buildings, while some rioters marched to the Bishop's palace and set that on fire. They thus drew away troops who had been stationed at the Mansion House, and that, too, was set on fire. Nor were the riots of Bristol the last of the disturbances, though in no other town was such destruction carried out. Meanwhile cholera was on its way, and in February 1832 it reached London. Some 50,000 people perished during the visitation.

Eleven Days

In December Parliament was summoned again, and a third Reform Bill passed its second reading in the House of Commons by a majority of one hundred and sixty-two. On March 26 it was sent up to the House of Lords, where now some of the opponents began to waver. There was talk of swamping the Opposition by the creation of peers, based upon the actual fact that the King had given consent to some small measure of this character. On April 14 the Peers carried the second reading by a majority of nine. On May 7, however, they again hardened their hearts and carried a hostile amendment by 151 votes to 116. The King refused to create new peers and the Ministry resigned.

One part of the secret history of the eleven days that followed has been told by Mr. Graham Wallas from the

Memoirs of Francis Place. The Duke of Wellington was asked to form a Ministry. He attempted the task, intending to introduce a more partial Reform Bill than the one under debate. The National Political Union, and its branches throughout the country, prepared for armed rebellion. Birmingham, it was decided, should begin, and the blacksmiths' shops worked all night preparing arms, and, in particular, making immense numbers of little steel balls with four sharp points projecting, so placed that however they were thrown on the ground one point always stuck vertically upwards. These were called the "'Tis-as-it-was." They were to be used to make the roads impassable for cavalry. In Francis Place's back parlour consultations of the leaders were held, and continual messengers posted between them and Attwood in Birmingham. Elaborate plans were made to stop the departure of troops from London. But their masterpiece, in Place's opinion, was the issue of a bill with but these words on it, "To stop the Duke go for gold." A run took place on the Bank of England, which only ceased when it was known that the Duke had failed to form a Cabinet and that the King was obliged to recall Lord Grey.

From the other side we learn that the difficulty which the Duke of Wellington could not surmount was the refusal of Peel to enter the Cabinet in order to carry a measure of reform similar to one to which he had offered the most determined resistance. This would have been a course precisely similar to that which he had just taken with regard to Catholic Emancipation. But with regard to Catholic Emancipation Peel really had had no choice. It would not have been practicable to have handed over the task of the carrying through of the measure to those who had advocated it, because they would have been unable to do so in the face of the strong opposition of the King and the general dislike to the measure in Great Britain. On the question of Reform there was no overwhelming reason why Peel should again shake the confidence of his party

and appear untrustworthy and a turncoat in the public eye. Whatever the cause, the Duke of Wellington's failure to form a Ministry left the King no alternative but to agree to the creation of peers. The threat was sufficient, and the Reform Bill was passed.

It disfranchised 57 small boroughs, which returned 113 members, took away one member from each of 30 boroughs which returned two, and two from Weymouth and Melcombe Regis, which had conjointly returned four. It gave 62 additional seats to the counties, and 63 to cities and boroughs which had not previously been enfranchised. It reduced the representation of England by 18 members, giving 5 to Wales, 8 to Scotland and 5 to Ireland. It gave the borough franchise to £10 householders, abolishing previous qualifications; it added copyholders, leaseholders for lives, and tenants at will paying over £50 per annum, to the freeholders as county voters.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRSTFRUITS OF REFORM

Two questions arise from the previous narrative of the manner in which the Reform Act of 1832 was carried.

(1) *How far is it true that reform was carried by violence?*

As we have seen, the Bristol riots and the burning of Nottingham Castle took place after the Reform Bill had been rejected by the House of Lords, and that when these and other disturbances had taken place the Reform Bill was again sent up, and this time the second reading was passed. It seems difficult to avoid the conclusion that in all probability the House of Lords was to some extent intimidated, not so much by the actual violence used, as by the indication thus afforded of the intensity of popular feeling. When the second crisis came and the Duke of Wellington gave up the task of forming a Ministry, it does not appear that the threatened armed rebellion, centring at Birmingham, had any direct influence upon the situation. But the crucial fact of the matter was that the Duke of Wellington was convinced that even if he did form a Ministry, he would be obliged to introduce some measure of reform. It may have been a fact that he was driven to this conclusion by his recognition of the excited state of the country. On the other hand, I think it is equally clear that the impression made by such violence as appeared, was mainly due to the fact that it took place in spite of the efforts of the leaders of the Reform Party to prevent disorder, and that these efforts were, as a rule, successful. Hence, it would have seemed evident to

observers of the time that very much worse things would be likely to happen if once the party of reform was satisfied that it could not succeed by constitutional methods. So far as we can draw a lesson from the experiences of the country from 1815 to 1832, it would appear to be that political effect depends not on any actual violence, but rather upon the evidences of intense emotion among those who are capable of effective violent action, combined with restraint. We may take the elections of Waterford and Clare as typical of the most effective popular demonstration, where bodies of men, representative of a vast population, show by their action that they are prepared to risk extremities for a cause, but make their demonstration in an absolutely irreproachable manner.

(2) *What did the Reform Act of* 1832 *actually accomplish?*

It did not democratise the Constitution. In one sense it may even be said that the Constitution of England was less democratic after 1832 than before, for it is probable that there was a smaller proportion of working men among those entitled to the franchise. Whereas the majority of scot-and-lot voters, and a considerable proportion of freemen voters, were working men, in 1832 but few working men could be found among the £10 householders.

This fact needs to be emphasised in order that we may understand how great was the disappointment of the working classes with the results of the Reform Bill of 1832. But it does not follow that the political instinct which led men to exert themselves so enthusiastically for a measure which can be described as one for their own disfranchisement, was unsound. It was of no real advantage to the great mass of the people that in this or that town a number of poor men should have votes under such conditions that it was practically certain they would be either coerced or bribed into voting according to the desires of the borough-monger. What the Act of 1832 really did was to make the House of Commons actually a representative

body. That was its most important result. It was, after all, not quite so important a matter that it made the House of Commons representative of the upper and middle classes, leaving it unrepresentative of the working classes. After all, the Constitution had been changed, and now it was clear that it could be changed again. There was nothing final about the £10 householder, nor any special reason why he should be a voter and the £9 householder be excluded. Household suffrage, manhood suffrage, adult suffrage, each in turn was destined, even from 1832, to come into the field of practical politics.

By making the House of Commons representative, the Reform Act of 1832 also compelled the leaders of political parties, the Ministers on the one hand, and the body of men who hoped to become Ministers on the other, to make their appeal for support to a large body of their fellow-citizens. This introduced a new element of publicity and responsibility into the conditions of party warfare, of governmental policy, and of opposition tactics. It also stimulated the development of public interest in national affairs, and developed public consciousness.

In December 1832 the Parliament which had carried the Reform Bill was dissolved, and in January of the next year the first reformed Parliament met. The effect of the new conditions under which legislation and administration were to be carried on in future may be judged from the following list of measures passed almost immediately—

By the determined pressure of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton the Act for the emancipation of slaves in British dominions was passed, at a cost for compensation to slave-owners of £20,000,000.

The first effective Act for regulating the labour of children in factories was passed in 1833.

In the same year the first grant of public money, £20,000, was made for elementary education.

Cattle-driving, bull-baiting, bear-baiting, and cock-

fighting were made illegal within five miles of Temple Bar.

The privilege of owners of land to refuse to pay their debts was abolished.

Quakers and Moravians were allowed to enter the House of Commons, substituting affirmation for an oath.

The Poor Law Act of 1834

The two measures, however, which were regarded at the time as being of supreme importance and which were regarded also as necessary corollaries of the Reform Act of 1832, were the new Poor Law Act of 1834 and the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835. In each case the Government prepared for the work of legislation by appointing a special Commission of Inquiry, partly because the prominent Civil Servants, having been appointed on the principle of political patronage during a long period of Tory administration, were quite out of sympathy with the Whig Cabinet. The Bishop of London was Chairman of the Commission on the Poor Law, but the most important members were Sturges Bourne, who had been Home Secretary under Canning, and who had brought in legislation previously to improve the system of local government; and Nassau Senior, who was repeatedly consulted by the Government as an expert in political economy, and whose name has been handed down to scorn by Karl Marx for his theory that all profit obtained in a cotton mill was the result of the work of the last hour. Edwin Chadwick, who had been private secretary to Jeremy Bentham, though only an Assistant Commissioner, appears to have imparted to the Commission a strong conviction of the necessity of effective central control over local authorities.

The Poor Law Commission brought no unbiased mind to the consideration of the state of poor-law administration in the country. It seized upon what it regarded as glaring examples of the greatest abuses, and represented these as typical, if not exactly of the existing condition of the

country, yet of the tendency to which the whole country was rapidly drifting. It would, therefore, be a very great mistake to take their findings as an authoritative statement of the general state of the country with regard to the working of those village institutions for mutual help which had been regulated by the Poor Law Acts of Elizabeth and succeeding legislation. The investigation of that question is a task awaiting some future historian.

Abuses of Outdoor Relief

The attention of the Commissioners was concentrated on certain definite abuses which were specially characteristic of rural districts. Some account of these has already been given. They found that the overseers and churchwardens in many parishes were in the habit of administering the Poor Law corruptly, as, for example, by using the rates to pay the rents of their own tenants. They found, further, that the practice of giving outdoor relief to agricultural labourers actually at work, in order to bring up their wages to a subsistence level, had innumerable evil effects. It caused farmers to discharge better workmen who did not belong to the parish in order to employ parishioners, and to discharge unmarried men to employ men with large families. It further acted as an inducement to them to reduce wages to merely nominal figures in order to secure labour at the expense of the other ratepayers. In this way it penalised small holders by making them subsidise the large farmers. Further, as relief was given on account of all children, whether legitimate or illegitimate, they found that this system stimulated the increase of population, and acted as a premium upon immorality. They singled out as an indication of the direction in which the country parishes were drifting the instance of Cholesbury in Buckinghamshire, where the owners and occupiers of property had been unable to pay the poor-rates and where, in consequence, the whole of the parish was cultivated by the labourers for their own benefit

under the direction of the parish priest, and yet a supplementary rate had to be levied upon the neighbouring parishes in order to bring up the maintenance of the labourers to the standard fixed by the County Justices. On the other hand they cited the cases of certain "well-managed" parishes, particularly Southwell, where, under the direction of Mr. George Nicholls (afterwards Sir George Nicholls, a member of the administrative Poor Law Commission and historian of the Poor Law), by a system of refusal of all relief, except in a "well-regulated workhouse," the poor-rates had been greatly reduced and pauperism minimised.

The London Workhouses

Much interesting evidence is to be found in the reports of the Assistant Commissioners depicting a class of abuses to which the Commissioners appear to have given little attention. In London, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, the workhouse system had been pretty firmly established, as every parish tried to drive its paupers as far as possible into neighbouring parishes. A fairly typical case is that of Holborn. This little parish had a workhouse accommodating 460 inmates. The children were not admitted to this workhouse if under the age of fifteen; but were committed to the care of a contractor at Barnet, who received an allowance of 3*s*. 4*d*. per head per week for each child, and he was expected to make his profit and living from what he could save out of this sum, and what work he could compel them to do. Within the workhouse there had been, only a short time before, no classification, but recently a partition had been put up, and on one side were kept all the men and old women, on the other side the younger female paupers. On the women's side would be found girls who had passed out of the Barnet contractor's care and who had been unable to support themselves after being sent out into the world at the age of fifteen, mothers of illegitimate children, the respect-

able wives of poor men unable to provide for child-birth in their own homes, confirmed prostitutes, imbeciles, sick and infirm women; on the men's side there was a similar medley of all characters and conditions. Such a workhouse as this was usually under the control of a master and matron, who had no small difficulty in controlling the more disorderly characters. Hence a system arose whereby special contractors volunteered to take charge of disorderly paupers. The customary payment received by these was 4*s*. 6*d*. per head per week, but there was a practice among the keepers of these houses of giving the men 2*d*. a day and sending them out to walk the streets. Naturally they supplemented their allowance by thieving, and when successful usually returned to their night's lodging intoxicated. The master of St. Pancras workhouse declared, what no doubt was the common experience, that the almost universal effect of pauper education was, "They scarcely ever emerge from the bad habits which are formed in the houses."

The point of view from which the Commissioners approached the whole question is well illustrated by the fact that while they condemned the bulk of existing workhouses for their lack of order and classification, yet they reserved their fiercest condemnation for one feature in the administration, the fact that the food supply was relatively good compared with the condition of semi-starvation under which the independent agricultural labourer had to exist.

The New Law

The provisions of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 closely followed the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry.

Since 1640 central control of the administration of the Poor Law had lapsed. The Act of 1834 re-established it in a much more rigorous form than had ever been known before. It created a body of three Poor Law Commissioners, with a secretary and a staff of assistants, soon to be known as

"The three Bashaws of Somerset House," or "The Three-headed Devil King," or simply "The Three." To the three Commissioners was given the power of making orders regulating every detail of the actions of the local authorities, of supervising all appointments and of discharging the officers of the local authority at its pleasure; and a little later that of auditing the accounts and surcharging the local administrators for illegal expenditure.

Secondly, the Act abolished the parish as the unit of administration, and created a new unit, the union. These unions were formed by Assistant Commissioners generally on the principle that the parishes which used the same market town should be in the same union.

Thirdly, the Act brought into play the representative principle, conceding not only that representation should go with taxation, but also that representation should be in proportion to taxation. Every owner and every occupier of rateable property was to have at least one vote for the Board of Guardians and an additional vote for every £50 of rateable value up to six votes as owner, and six as occupier. Hence the occupying owner of premises of over £250 rateable value had altogether twelve votes. This arrangement lasted until 1894.

The original principle of English local government was that of compulsory unpaid service. It is a principle which still obtains with regard to service on juries. Churchwardens and overseers were elected for a year, and might be re-elected at the end of the year. During the time of their office they had somehow to combine their public duties with their private activities. In the middle of the eighteenth century the practice became more and more common of delegating important duties to contractors, and this was regarded as the greatest improvement that had been introduced into poor-law administration. The Act of 1834 established the new principle of the local official and public servant, giving in many cases his whole time to his duties. Though Dickens promptly held up the new

type of executive officer to public odium in the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Bumble, yet this was the most beneficent of the changes produced by the Act.

The Policy of the New Law

If we turn from the machinery established by the Act of 1834 to the policy which that machinery was intended to serve, we find this embodied in the two celebrated maxims of the Commission: that no relief should be given on account of mere poverty, but only on account of indigence, or to use the word that afterwards became usual, destitution; and that the lot of the person who received relief should be made less eligible, both in appearance and in reality, than that of the worst-paid independent labourer. The Commissioners naturally regarded pauperism as a great social evil, but they did not consider that this evil really consisted in the poverty which reduced labourers to a condition of dependence upon the poor law; in their eyes it merely consisted in the fact that relief was given. It has frequently been made a reproach against Boards of Guardians that their members have regarded themselves rather as guardians of the poor-rates than as guardians of the poor. Where they have done so they have acted entirely in the spirit of the law. This was the purpose of the plural vote to large ratepayers, and the reason also of the property qualification to members of boards, originally fixed at £25 per annum rateable value. The intention of every detail in the Act was to repress pauperism as much as possible, and the success of the Act was estimated by the reduction in the total amount raised for poor relief.

In order to understand the spirit of the Act and of the Commissioners it is necessary to remember that the opinion of the governing classes at the time was dominated by the doctrines of the then established school of political economy, and in particular by the doctrine of Malthus that the existing poverty, social degradation and misery were

merely the consequence of the tendency of population to increase faster than subsistence. Lord Althorp in introducing the Bill remarked that "the system of poor relief was contrary to the principles of political economy, which even prohibited the exercise of private charity," and Nassau Senior feared that the rising poor-rates, unless forcibly checked, "would ultimately throw the land out of cultivation, and destroy by famine and pestilence all who had not the means of emigration." It was, however, felt that it was futile to endeavour to suppress public relief altogether. To do so would be only to create a great system of unorganised private relief. The safest and most practicable course was to order relief for those who were in lack of the very necessities of life, but to refuse it to all others.

Less Eligibility

The principle that the lot of the person who received relief should be less desirable than that of the independent labourer appeared, on the face of it, to be but pure justice. It was certainly difficult to enforce, for by the calculations of Edwin Chadwick, Secretary to the Commissioners, the independent agricultural labourer could only expect, on an average, to obtain for his own consumption 17 ozs. of bread per day and ¼ lb. of bacon per week. However, the difficulty, it was supposed, could be overcome by giving the pauper a subsistence which was physiologically sufficient, but in a form unfamiliar and distasteful; and by combining this diet with the loss of liberty. Hence the policy of the Commission was to put a stop immediately to outdoor relief of the able-bodied man, and ultimately to almost all outdoor relief, substituting instead "relief in well-regulated workhouses." Hence, also, the dietary scales still sacrosanct in the eyes of the Local Government Board, in which oatmeal occupies a prominent position.

Behind their conception of this principle of less eligibility their lay a very important economic fallacy, to which the Commissioners were victims in common with their

contemporaries. The economists of the day contrived to believe at one and the same time in the theory that wages always tended to the minimum of subsistence (the iron or brazen law of wages), and also in the theory that wages were always the maximum that the industrial condition of the country could bear (the wages fund theory). Thus determined by fixed limits above and below, the average wage of the independent labourer was, in their eyes, a definite fixed standard. Unless the whole labouring population were to be tempted to become paupers, obviously the lot of the pauper must, on this theory, be made worse than that which the presumed fixed standard allows to the independent labourer. Neither the minimum subsistence theory nor the wages fund theory will bear examination; and to depress the standard of life in accordance with 1834 principles tends to depress wages also.

Nevertheless, the less eligibility theory contains a truth most important at the present day, if only it be put the other way round. We need to look in another direction for the starting-point of our social grades. We must begin from the bottom and compare the pauper with the criminal, as well as with the independent labourer.

We have learnt to repudiate torture as morally degrading to the community, therefore death is the extreme penalty which British law allows. The death penalty again, we have learnt by experience, must be reserved only for the most heinous crimes. Some other penalty, *i.e.*, an existence which, however maimed or painful, is still preferable to death, must be the lot of the minor criminal. The innocent pauper must obviously be treated better than the best treated criminal; and the independent labourer who is not only innocent, but who also does a service to the life of the community by his labour, is clearly entitled to a lot better than that of the man maintained in idleness at the public expense. Put in this form the old principle of less eligibility becomes the philosophical basis for the demand for a minimum wage.

The Chartists and the Poor Law

The Act of 1834 was passed at a fortunate time for its peaceable enforcement. The price of wheat was steadily falling from 1831, when it stood at 80*s*. a quarter, to 1836, when the January price was 36*s*. 5*d*. During the years 1834 to 1836 there was also a very considerable boom in railway development which increased wages and diminished unemployment. But the railway boom of 1836 was followed by the panic of 1837; and simultaneously with the return of depression there came bad harvests and higher prices of food. During the good years the new method of administration cut down the amount of poor relief by approximately one-third; during the subsequent distress it prevented the figures rising to anything like the heights that had been reached in 1818 or in 1834. But the rates were saved at the cost of much social friction. The Chartist agitation which burst out in 1837 was very largely inspired by hatred of the new Poor Law and by the hope that the original Act, which was for five years only, would not be renewed in 1839. The *Northern Star* and the speeches of the Chartists alike rang with denunciation of the Commissioners and their methods. The new workhouses were called Bastilles, the oatmeal gruel of the dietary scale "hell broth." A curious skit on the dominant Malthusianism, published under the pseudonym of Marcus, which suggested that a national association of old maids and confirmed bachelors should be created, and commissioned by the State to strangle at birth the greater number of the children born in the country, was republished by the Chartists under the title of *The Murder Book, by Marcus, One of the Three*, and they were convinced that it did actually represent the esoteric views of the Commissioners. A special grievance in the factory towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire lay in the fact that the Commissioners endeavoured to promote migration from over-populated rural parishes in the South of England to the factory towns.

However, when the time came, Parliament made the Act permanent by an overwhelming majority. Nothing operated more forcibly to bring home to the minds of the working classes that they were not represented in the reformed Parliament and that there were broad divergences of interest and of opinion between them and the enfranchised middle classes.

If the philosophy behind the principles of the new Poor Law was defective, a still greater weakness in the whole scheme was that it failed to recognise the complexity of problems to be dealt with. The causes of destitution are very various. The principle of refusing to deal with the poor until they are destitute, rules out any effort to deal with the causes of destitution and to prevent their operating to the bitter end. The man who is thrown out of work through sickness and who remains unemployed until his resources are exhausted, may be looked at from a point of view of Health, as somebody who should have been healed at the earliest possible moment, and restored to full activity. The men of 1834, on the other hand, regarded him simply as a pauper, into whom should be instilled the greatest possible reluctance to ask for public relief. He was, in fact, to be treated as an awful example in order that other people should be induced to provide medical attendance for themselves. Sir George Nicholls, for example, pointed out that medical clubs existed whereby a man could obtain advice and medicine when needed for an annual subscription at the rate of a halfpenny a week. On the same principle there was reluctance to give a decent education to the orphan children under the care of the guardians for fear lest parents should become less anxious to prevent their children falling into the grip of the Poor Law. In these and other respects great changes took place through the development of a more practical and less doctrinaire opinion some thirty years later.

If we attempt to sum up the good and evil of the Poor Law Amendment Act, on the one side it is clear that it was

absolutely necessary for a machinery of central control to be established over local authorities; that the superseding of the parish as a unit by the union was a step in the right direction, and one which will have to be followed, in all probability, by the superseding of the union by the still greater unit of the administrative county; that the principle of a salaried official class was a vast improvement upon compulsory unpaid service or the contract system; that it was absolutely necessary to get rid of the demoralising developments of outdoor relief. On the other side it appears equally clear that the method chosen for the control of the local authorities by detailed orders, audit and surcharge, was on the one hand calculated to rob the Boards of Guardians of initiative and responsibility, and to cause them to attract an inferior class of men; on the other hand it notoriously failed to prevent jobbery, and where the policy of the inspectors of the central department was most enlightened, this coercive method of control failed to secure the hearty co-operation of the boards. Thus, for example, from almost the very beginning the central department urged that children should be provided for in some other way than by being immured in the general workhouse; yet even at the present day, after eighty years of continual effort, this object has not been entirely achieved. It is also probable that the Commissioners were deceived in their expectation that the repression of outdoor relief to the able-bodied man would lead to a corresponding increase of wages. On the whole it would rather appear that between 1834 and 1850 the repressive policy diminished even the inadequate resources available for the maintenance of the agricultural labourer in the country and of unskilled labourers in towns; that the credit for the rise of wages which did occur later must be given entirely to other forces, to the development of the railway system, free trade, the gold discoveries in California and Australia, and the other causes leading to the period of commercial prosperity which lasted from 1850 to 1876.

CHAPTER VIII

MUNICIPAL REFORM

EVEN more closely and inevitably connected with the Reform Act of 1832 than the new Poor Law was the reform of Municipal Corporations, which was carried out in 1835 on the initiative of the Radical wing of the Liberal Party and by a compromise between the Houses of Commons and Lords.

A Select Committee of the House of Commons, appointed in February 1833, reported in favour of the appointment of a Commission. The Commission, again, appointed Assistant Commissioners, who gathered together a great deal of extremely interesting information from a number of towns. The Commissioners themselves, as Mr. and Mrs. Webb have shown, were somewhat hurried in their review of the evidence brought before them, and reached their conclusions rather under the guidance of preconceived notions than in a strictly scientific manner. Their verdict, as summarised in their final paragraph, is familiar through frequent quotation—

> "In conclusion we report to Your Majesty that there prevails amongst the great majority of the incorporated towns a general, and, in our opinion, a just dissatisfaction with their Municipal Institutions; a distrust of the self-elected Municipal Councils, whose powers are subject to no popular control and whose acts and proceedings, being secret, are unchecked by the influence of public opinion; a distrust of the Municipal Magistracy; a discontent under the burthens of Local Taxation, while revenues which ought to be applied to the

public advantage are sometimes wastefully bestowed upon individuals, sometimes squandered for objects injurious to the character and the morals of the people. We therefore feel it to be our duty to represent to Your Majesty that the existing Municipal Corporations neither possess nor deserve the confidence or respect of Your Majesty's subjects, and that a thorough reform must be effected before they can become, what we humbly submit to Your Majesty they ought to be, useful and efficient instruments of local government."

The Municipal Franchise

It is impossible to summarise in a few paragraphs the bewildering variety, before 1835, of local constitutions of the Corporate Boroughs of England and Wales, either as to their form or as to their actual working. Thus take, for example, the elementary question of the basis of the right of citizenship. The Commissioners found in the 237 towns inquired into, twenty-two different ways in which freedom was acquired. These different ways they classify into six types.

In 8 boroughs citizenship was acquired by scot-and-lot habitancy, *i. e.* by rate-paying occupiers.

In 4 there was household suffrage.

In 15 freedom was acquired by inheritance, purchase, or by gift.

In 53 by inheritance, apprenticeship, purchase, gift, or election.

In 15 by any of these methods or by marrying a daughter, or (in some towns) the eldest daughter, or the widow of a freeman.

In 112 it was only to be obtained by grant, purchase, or election.

The proportion of freemen to population similarly varied enormously. Portsmouth, with a population of 46,000, had but 102 freemen; Cambridge had 194; Leicester had 4500 in a population of 40,512.

There was a similar variety in the amount of control which those people who happened to be freemen exercised over the governing body. In 186 boroughs out of 237 there existed self-elected councils, renewing themselves by co-option; in 25 boroughs there were elected councils; in 26 there were no councils at all.

Municipal Finance

To very many people at the present day nothing is so characteristic of a municipal corporation as the collection of rates. In the unreformed corporations rates were supplementary and exceptional methods of making the income balance the expenditure, and the normal income was derived from borough property, from lands, leases and tithes, tolls of markets and fairs, town dues on goods both brought into the town and sent away, fees for admission to citizenship, and fines for refusal to serve in municipal offices, though in *several* boroughs supplementary rates were levied. Rates were, however, the regular source of income for Improvement, Paving, Lighting or Sewering Commissions, where these existed. In many towns deficiencies of municipal income were made up by the Member of Parliament or the patron of the borough; and in some, before the Reform Act of 1832, the member or the patron paid all the municipal expenses.

With regard to the expenditure the Commission found that—

> "It is not often that much of the corporate property is expended on police or public improvements. . . . The principle that the property of the Corporation should be turned to the profit of the individual members has been undisguisedly adopted in few Corporations compared with the number of those in which it is indirectly acted upon. . . . The direct appropriation of the capital, instead of the income of the Corporation, is generally regarded as a fraud upon the public."

Municipal affairs, they declared, were managed with the utmost secrecy; and as for municipal accounts, in some boroughs none were kept at all, in others accounts were kept very imperfectly; in very few boroughs was there a regular audit, and in still fewer were the accounts published. The Mayor of Grampound had left the borough on its disfranchisement in 1821, and the Corporation books and accounts had not been found since.

Municipal Abuses

It was not difficult for the Commissioners to find striking examples of the corruption and inefficiency of many of the boroughs. They tell us of the municipal magistrates of East Retford fighting with a prisoner, while those of Malmesbury were often unable to read or write; of a town clerk, as clerk to the magistrates, advising the commitment of a prisoner, then selecting the jury, then conducting the prosecution, and, finally, advising the bench as to its verdict and sentence; of separate and distinct police authorities for each quarter of Bath, except for one which was left unprotected; of political riots fomented by the police of Coventry, who were all carefully selected by the town council from one political party; of £10,000 raised by the Corporation of Leicester by mortgaging the municipal property, and spent to secure the return of a political partisan; of tolls on the river Witham at Lincoln granted to the Corporation for the maintenance of navigation, but divided among the members of the Corporation; of the Coventry Corporation school with its two masters, with salaries totalling £700 a year, and but one scholar between them.

Mr. and Mrs. Webb have shown that the report of the Commissioners was unfair to the Corporations, because it dwelt exclusively on abuses. Their extraordinarily thorough inquiry into the whole subject gives the general impression of a struggle carried on all over the country, with varying degrees of success, for honest and efficient local administra-

tion. They further point out that no direct connection could be shown between democratic election and either municipal purity or municipal efficiency; but that some of the boroughs with the most democratic constitutions, as Ipswich and Berwick-on-Tweed, were amongst the most corrupt, while some governed by close Corporations, like Liverpool, were ably and honestly administered.

The Act of 1835

However lacking in historic justice the report of the Commission might be, the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, which was the result of the inquiry, was a singularly successful measure. Mr. and Mrs. Webb describe its main effect as the conversion of municipalities from associations of producers into associations of consumers. In probably a great majority of cases an English town was originally a hypertrophied village, and municipal institutions developed out of rural institutions, though largely modified by the influence of the municipality of Roman origin which survived in London through the Saxon Heptarchy and the Danish invasions. The tie which bound the burgesses together was largely the tie of common occupation, originally as peasants cultivating neighbouring lands under varying methods of co-operation; later as traders and craftsmen associated together in gilds. This basis of organisation was, according to Mr. and Mrs. Webb, the root of that spirit of exclusiveness, with its hostility to the "alien" and its indifference to the well-being of the unskilled labourer, which was the greatest vice of the old Corporations. Further, for the same reason, both gilds and Corporations busied themselves mainly in fostering the trade interests of the members, rather than in caring for the interests, as householders and human beings, of the whole urban population. The Act of 1835 established citizenship upon the basis of residence. The reformed Corporation became an association of householders, associated together by the link of neighbourhood, for the purpose of promoting

the common interests of all residents; among which common interests sanitation, the maintenance and improvement of roads, police protection, education, protection from fire, and the provision of common means of enjoyment in parks and other open spaces, libraries, baths, museums, etc., have since become familiar examples of municipal activity. The older type of local organisation, being founded on the association of men who followed the same occupation, is broadly analogous to a trade union, and may, I think, be termed an organisation of the masculine type; the reformed Corporation, resting upon the tie of neighbourhood, is analogous to a co-operative society of the usual British type, and may appropriately be said to be of the feminine type of organisation. This change was the most important of those effected by the Act.

The second most important change was not originally intended, but came in as the result of the disinclination of the House of Lords to accept the measure in its original form. Before 1832 there was no distinction in England between local bodies for the purpose of the administration of justice and for local government. Municipal Corporations, therefore, were really as much concerned with the one matter as with the other; in fact, the original object of securing a Charter of Incorporation had always very largely been to secure exemption from the ordinary administration of justice in the Counties. Hence the Corporations had their Judges, their Constables (often unpaid), and their gaols. By the Act of 1835 the local administration of justice was separated in corporate Boroughs from local government, the Magistrates ceasing to be appointed according to the ancient constitution of their particular town, did not now become the choice of the resident occupiers, as the framers of the Bill would have liked, but became the nominees of the Crown. The fact that the Mayor and ex-Mayor are Justices of the Peace in provincial boroughs was a sort of softening of the transition, and is almost as much an historical survival as are the

judicial duties of the Aldermen of the Corporation of London, which passed scathless through the 'thirties, and which has remained to this day one of the most venerable of historical monuments to be found among our institutions.

The type of Municipal Corporations set up was naturally founded upon what appeared to the framers of the Act to be the best existing examples. The broad principle is that the burgesses elect a representative council which has full power to exercise all the functions given to the Corporation, either by local or by general Act. It is the elected Councillors who elect the Mayor and Aldermen, and who, with these, appoint all municipal servants, assign them their duties and dismiss them at pleasure. The object of the Act of 1835 was not to bring the Municipal Corporations under the control of a central department, but to put them under the control of the local burgesses who elect them. Hence the meetings of the Municipal Councils have to be held in public, and the accounts to be audited by locally elected auditors. There is further provision for a local referendum on schemes of sufficient importance to require new parliamentary powers.

Another characteristic of the provincial Municipal Corporations, which has not been applied since to London, is the arrangement whereby members sit in groups of three or six for wards of the borough, and one-third of the number retire every year. This leads to continuity, and also to a tendency for municipal elections to be fought out on personal grounds as well as on party issues. It also probably has tended to prevent in provincial boroughs the formation of parties according to questions of municipal policy, which has been one of the most important features of London history since the creation of the London County Council.

Grievances have always been cherished by Radicals since 1835 against the House of Lords on account of two features introduced by their amendments. One is the retention of

the indirectly elected aldermen, who form one-fourth of the Council; the other is the retention of peculiar privileges by those who were the freemen of boroughs at the passing of the Act, and the retention in their hands of a great deal of old corporate property.

Not very much change was made in the actual functions exercised by the municipalities by the Act of 1835. One of the most important was that boroughs were required to form Watch Committees and take over from the Commissions for watching and lighting, which had grown up in many towns, the powers entrusted to them, with the obligation of covering the whole town where parts of it had been left unserved before. The Corporations were also given general power to make bye-laws for the suppression of nuisances; and hence they became recognised health authorities, in which direction they were shortly required to make very great advances. They were also universally authorised to levy rates, whether they had done so before or not.

The Acts of 1834 and 1835 compared

Thus, curiously enough, in Acts of 1834 and 1835, the same Government and Parliament established, practically simultaneously, two rival systems of local government in England and Wales, based as far as possible upon opposite political theories. The Boards of Guardians were *ad hoc* authorities to deal with one particular local function; the Municipal Councils general local authorities, to deal with all sorts of local requirements; the Boards were elected by plural property vote, the Councils by a household franchise; the Boards were all made the servants of a single national authority consisting of three Civil Servants, the Councils were made the servants of the local citizens.

In the comparison thus instituted the municipal principle has, on the whole, emerged with the greater share of credit; and the later history of local government has witnessed its gradual triumph. The *ad hoc* principle secured a

temporary extension by the creation of School Boards under the Education Act of 1870, but these went by the Acts of 1902 and 1903; and the County Councils Act of 1888, the Parish Councils Act of 1894, and the London Government Act of 1899, extended the authority of councils of a municipal type over the whole country. Even the Boards of Guardians are, apparently, doomed.

But one principle embodied in the Act of 1834, that of central control, is seen to be necessary, though the methods of exercising such control were ill-selected.

CHAPTER IX

FACTORY LEGISLATION

Robert Owen

We have seen how at the beginning of the popular movement for the reform of Parliament the lead was taken by the textile workers of Lancashire, but that in the final crisis the towns which showed the greatest amount of feeling on the subject were Birmingham, Bristol and Nottingham. In the textile districts the question of parliamentary representation had become less urgent and vital than that of factory control.

In a previous chapter we have given an account of the passing of the Act of 1802, which was both one of a long series of Acts dealing with pauper apprentices and also the first of a series of Factory Acts. It applied only to parish apprentices, and as the use of the steam-engine grew, the parish apprentice became comparatively unimportant compared with the other children and young persons, very largely the offspring of hand-loom weavers, who were more and more recruited for the mills.

The question of the general regulation of the labour of children in any sort of factory using power was the next phase; and it was Robert Owen who was chiefly instrumental in bringing the question to a practical issue. In 1800 he obtained the control of the New Lanark Mills, which had been founded by his father-in-law David Dale. Although Dale had been in his time a noted philanthropist, and the conditions which he secured for his child-workers had been the subject of much eulogy, yet Robert Owen

found the actual condition of those children to be horrible, and he set to work on a series of reforms, favoured by the extraordinarily prosperous condition of the cotton-spinning industry at that time. He excluded children from the factories till the age of ten, and he reduced the hours of work from 11¾ to 10¾ per day. He found that the immediate loss was only 1¼ per cent., and he hoped that before long the loss would disappear altogether. He secured a parliamentary inquiry, which reported in favour of legislation, and himself drafted a Bill which would have prohibited children from working under the age of ten, would have required satisfactory evidence that they had reached that age before being admitted to the factory, would have limited the hours of labour for young persons under eighteen to 10½ per day, and would have provided for paid inspectors. His Bill was much altered before it was placed on the Statute Book in 1819. The actual measure passed only prohibited employment of children in factories under the age of nine, and required no evidence that that age had been reached. It left unregulated the hours of labour of young persons between sixteen and eighteen, and allowed those from nine to sixteen years of age to work 12 hours per day. Worst of all, it still left inspection of factories to the amateur efforts of the Justices of the Peace.

Even as it was, the Act of 1819 was denounced as calculated to drive trade out of the country and to demoralise the working classes, on the ground that "in the lower orders the deterioration of morals increases with the quantity of unemployed time of which they have the command. The Bill actually encourages vice, it encourages idleness by Act of Parliament."

In 1820 the severity of the Act of 1819 was modified by employers being allowed to make up time lost by failure of water power. This probably did not matter very much, as very little attention was paid by factory owners to its provisions. Even in Manchester the regular working hours were later found to be 14 per day, the children

being retained in meal times to clean the machinery; and other towns were even less law abiding.

An amending Act of 1825 made a certain advance by limiting the hours of labour on Saturdays to nine, and by excluding Justices who were interested in factories from hearing cases under the law. On the other hand the reactionary step was taken of freeing employers from all responsibility with regard to the employment of children under the legal age if they obtained a statement from the parents that the child was old enough to be lawfully employed. An Act passed in 1831 prohibited night-work for all under twenty-one years of age, and raised the age for young persons prohibited from working over twelve hours a day to eighteen.

The Agitation of the Thirties

In 1830 the demand for legislation took the form of widespread popular agitation, sweeping simultaneously over the factory towns of the West Riding of Yorkshire and of Lancashire. The movement was led by a group of men remarkable for the variety of social and religious sections which they represented. There was Richard Oastler of Fixby Hall, a Tory and a land agent, whose series of letters to the *Leeds Mercury* entitled "Yorkshire Slavery," published in September 1830, initiated the movement in the West Riding; there was John Fielden, a Radical and a cotton manufacturer; John Doherty, the Secretary of the Cotton Spinners' Federation; the Rev. G. S. Bull, the Vicar of Bradford; the Rev. J. R. Stevens, a Wesleyan minister; George Candy, a journalist; Philip Grant, a politician; and behind these "Short Time Committees" manned by spinners and weavers in the textile towns.

The reform demanded was the limitation of the hours of labour of women and children to ten per day. It must be admitted that this ostensible demand was not the only object of the agitation. The factory operatives were no

doubt really concerned for the well-being of the women and children, but they also had an indirect object of their own to serve. This was not, as has been stated, the indirect exclusion of women in order that their work might go to men, but the limitation of the hours during which the machinery would run, and during which they themselves would be employed. They believed that this limitation of the hours of labour, by lessening the output, would also raise the selling price of the manufactured article, and enable higher wages to be obtained. Fielden, indeed, had put forward the proposal of an eight-hours day as a measure calculated to raise both wages and profits, for he maintained that it was merely the excessive competition between the British manufacturers themselves that kept down the total returns to the industry.

The Ten-hours Bill

In 1831 Michael Sadler introduced his Ten-hours Bill in an interval in the struggle for Parliamentary Reform. The subject was referred to a Select Committee of the House of Commons of which Sadler was Chairman. He showed an extraordinary activity in obtaining evidence, very largely from the operatives themselves. He brought up children and their parents to tell of the cruelly long hours and the constant flogging; young men showed their twisted and deformed frames; overseers came to confess how savage were the methods of discipline regularly adopted; and one man to confess that his occupation was to hunt down the apprentices who fled from a remote factory.

The Royal Commission of 1833

Sadler's Committee reported strongly in favour of legislation. But a great outcry arose from the manufacturers, furiously angry at the unusual action of the Committee in taking evidence from the sufferers themselves, to the effect that the Committee had been carried away by sentiment and had credulously accepted unreliable and misleading

evidence. The Whig Government, therefore, instead of bringing in a Bill, or allowing Sadler's Bill to proceed, referred the whole matter to a Royal Commission, of which Edwin Chadwick was a member. It was commonly believed that the object was to shelve the whole matter indefinitely, but if this were the case that object was defeated by the promptitude with which the Commission made its inquiries. Whatever bias it had was certainly in favour of the unrestricted liberty of manufacturers to carry on their business as they thought fit; but this bias was not sufficient to prevent them from endeavouring to get at the facts and viewing them with an open mind.

The Commission found that, whatever the law might say, children were actually employed just as long as adults, with the result that they suffered physical deterioration and total or partial deprivation of education. On the general principle of the liberty of the individual to seek his own happiness, they reported that children were not free agents. With regard to the efficiency of the existing law, they found that it had become almost entirely inoperative through gradual encroachment of one form or another, and through the system of blacklisting operatives who gave evidence, so that they could never again obtain employment. They found that it was common for the operatives to be forbidden to have watches, so that they should be unable to check the vagaries of the factory clock. They further found that the better employers themselves advocated legislative control, provided only that it were efficiently carried out by means of an adequate staff of inspectors who would secure the employer who loyally obeyed the law from being undersold by more unscrupulous rivals.

The Act of 1833

The result of the Royal Commission was the first effective Factory Act, that of 1833. It owed its importance to the fact that for the first time the problem of enforcing

the law was dealt with. Various plans had been suggested; Sadler and his friends advocated very high penalties, and rewards for detection; others advocated the employment of district inspectors. The solution actually adopted was Chadwick's proposal of itinerant inspectors under the direct employment of the Home Office. The four who were appointed under the Act of 1833 formed the nucleus of what has since developed into an important organ of Central Government.

The Act applied to Cotton, Woollen, Worsted, Hemp, Flax, Tow, Linen and Silk mills. It prohibited night-work to all young persons under eighteen; it allowed no child under nine to work except in silk mills, and it prescribed a limitation of hours of labour to nine in one day, or forty-eight in a week, for every child under eleven on the first passing of the Act; a year later this restriction was to apply to all children under twelve, and, again, in a year's time to all children under thirteen.

Michael Sadler's Bill had proposed to prohibit the employment of all persons under twenty-one between the hours of 7 p.m. and 6 a.m., and to enforce a ten-hours day (eight on Saturday) for all persons under eighteen. Throughout the period when Sadler's Bill was before Parliament great demonstrations were taking place in the north; but it was a great blow to the cause when Sadler was defeated at Leeds by Thomas Babington Macaulay (afterwards Lord Macaulay). After the election of 1832 Lord Ashley took charge of Sadler's measure. The demonstrations for a Ten-hours Bill continued; 10,000 people assembled at Low Moor, Bradford, to protest against the substitution of the Government's measure for Lord Ashley's, and it was even proposed to organise a general strike for an eight-hours day. Nevertheless the Government persisted in refusing Lord Ashley's measure and in pushing forward their own; pleading that, so far as children were concerned, they went further than Lord Ashley by being prepared to limit their hours of labour to eight instead of ten per day.

After the Act of 1833 had been in operation for a year, the manufacturers attempted to prevent the clause for raising the age at which it was permitted to work for more than forty-eight hours per week to thirteen from coming into operation, and they induced Poulett Thompson, the Home Secretary, to bring in an amendment to this effect. But the operatives then, who had decried the Act as valueless, roused themselves to oppose its being whittled down, and brought sufficient pressure to bear upon Parliament to cause the Government to drop this measure.

Triumph of the Ten-hours Day

For some years after this the question of further regulation of the conditions of employment lay dormant. But in 1840 Lord Ashley obtained the appointment of a Royal Commission on the employments of the people. In 1841 he made a tour of the manufacturing districts and addressed public meetings on the subject, and the Short-time Committees which had been formed in the 'thirties were reorganised. In 1844 Sir Robert Peel met the agitation, as it had been met in 1833, by an Act which failed to satisfy the agitation, but which was practically advantageous. He allowed all over eight to work, but reduced the hours for children from eight to thirteen years to six and a half per day, requiring them to attend school during another part of the day, and so introducing the half-time system, which, however properly it may have been condemned since, was at any rate a great improvement on the system of practically full-time work before. By the same measure young persons and women were limited to twelve hours per day, out of which an hour and a half had to be taken for meal times, and nine hours on Saturdays; and it was further required that dangerous machinery should be fenced. This measure rather encouraged than checked the agitation for a ten-hours day; and at last, in 1847, the principle was conceded, though in a way which allowed for evasion. The Act of 1850 may be regarded as the final

triumph of the movement, for it required that the factory hours should be between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., or between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., with an hour and a half off for meals, and that factories should close at two o'clock on Saturdays, thus limiting the hours per week to sixty, under conditions which made enforcement practicable

Since 1850, repeated Factory Acts and other legislation based on the principle of protecting the operative have been passed. The principle of State regulation has been extended to non-textile factories, to mines, to ordinary workshops and even to home-workers. Sanitary provisions have alone become a complex code, somewhat difficult to enforce, owing to the division of duties between the Factory Inspector responsible to the Home Office and the Sanitary Inspector responsible to the local sanitary authority. Laws for securing workers compensation for accident and for illness caused by the conditions of employment have supplemented the factory code proper; and, finally, by the Trade Boards Act, and the Miners' Minimum Wage Act, the principle of State regulation of wages has been conceded, on the one hand, to sweated women-workers in certain industries, and, on the other, to a vast body of men organised in an exceedingly strong union.

The question is no more settled now than it was in 1833 or 1850. On the other hand, the regulation of wages, of hours and other conditions of labour, is likely to be the subject both of fierce political conflicts and of much actual legislation in the near future.

CHAPTER X

THE PROGRESS OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION DURING THE FORTY YEARS' PEACE

Invention in Manufacture

The transformation of industry to which the term "Industrial Revolution" has been applied, in England successively took the form of the transformation, through the application of steam power, of manufacture, of land transit and of ocean-going transit.

The beginning of the great change in manufacture took place in the eighteenth century, and so important were the series of inventions that took place in the beginning of the reign of George III, that readers of Arnold Toynbee are apt to run away with the impression that the Industrial Revolution was an event which took place in the ten years between 1760 and 1770. We have already pointed out, however, that while the new methods of spinning were well established by 1815, the power loom had only begun to make its way. In 1815 there were only some 3000 power looms in use in Great Britain, in 1820 the number had increased to 12,000, in 1825 to 25,000, in 1834 to 100,000. But even then it was estimated that there were a quarter of a million hand-loom weavers competing with the machines, which were still largely restricted to the coarser work. Invention, however, continually followed invention. The Jacquard loom was introduced in 1820, and made possible the weaving by the power loom of intricate designs. Between 1826 and 1831 the differential motion for slubbing and roving frames was introduced by Houldsworth from

America, and Richard Roberts perfected his entirely self-acting mule, and these inventions enormously cheapened the process of spinning. The effect of the continued progress in manufacturing method upon the output of the cotton industry is very well shown by the growth of the importation of raw cotton, which was—

82	million	lb.	in	1815
247	,,	,,	,,	1830
318	,,	,,	,,	1835
459	,,	,,	,,	1840
659	,,	,,	,,	1851

Railway Building

But the characteristic industrial feature of the Forty Years' Peace between Waterloo and the Crimea was the revolution in transport. The modern railway presents the union of two ideas, the metal rails to reduce friction and to secure full control of rapidly driven carriages, and the steam locomotive to supply mechanical power. At the very beginning of the nineteenth century both of these devices were known in their separate forms. Stationary steam engines were in common use for various purposes. In 1801 the Surrey Iron Railway Co. obtained parliamentary powers for a line to be worked by horse power; and in 1803 Trevithick had working a road locomotive, and the following year he established a tramway worked by locomotive power at Merthyr. The development, however, of the British railway system begins with the Stockton and Darlington Railway, which in 1821 passed its Act of Parliament, and in 1823 obtained sanction to use steam power, on the advice of its engineer, George Stephenson. This was speedily followed by the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, which obtained parliamentary powers in 1825. The promoters were long doubtful as to the motive power to be adopted, but they finally submitted three steam locomotives to a test race on October 6, 1829, at Rainhill, and

when George Stephenson's "Rocket" attained a speed of twenty-nine miles per hour the issue was settled. The Liverpool and Manchester Railway was opened in 1830, an occasion marked by Huskisson's death by accident. Many important lines were started in the years immediately following: 1833 saw the passing of the Act for the London and Birmingham line and the London and Greenwich line; 1834 of that from London to Southampton; 1835 the London and Croydon, and the Great Western; 1836 the South Eastern and Southern Counties; 1837 the London and Brighton. In 1837 this vigorous activity was followed by a panic and a temporary check, but in 1840 activity revived, and the railways already established began to pay handsome dividends.

Railway Regulation

By 1840 it had become clear that railways had ceased to be a doubtful experiment, and had become an essential part of the industrial and social life of the nation. It became necessary to consider on which, of various competing principles, the national policy with regard to railways should be based. On the whole the general disposition was to regard a railway as being a modification of the ordinary high road; on the supposition that while it might, like a turnpike road, be created by a Joint Stock Company for the sake of profit, it yet could be used, under suitable regulations, by all sorts of individuals owning their own locomotives, their own trucks and carriages, and competing with one another in the transport of goods and passengers much as did the coaches that plied for hire on the high roads. This conception naturally had to yield before experience. The railway companies rightly did not give facilities for all and sundry to run their trains upon the metals, and it soon became clear that the corporation that owned the line must also control and manage the traffic.

However, the general idea of trusting to the force of competition in order to secure the interests of the general

public was too fully indoctrinated into the people of England to be readily abandoned in any circumstances whatever. When it was seen that there could be no competition of different carriers along the line of a particular railway company, it was still thought that there might rightly be competition between different railway companies serving the same districts. It has, in fact, taken at least half a century of experience to make the British public understand, in the first place, that railway competition is necessarily wasteful, and, in the second place, that it is the general community which has to pay for the waste. This obstinate belief in the virtues in all circumstances of competition was largely the reason why so little consideration was given to the alternative policy of State ownership, and to the reluctance with which Parliament entered upon what proved the unavoidable task of State Regulation of Railways.

In 1840 the Railway Regulation Act was passed, giving to the Board of Trade the duty of inspecting railways before they were opened in order to secure the safety of the public. This was followed by the Cheap Trains Act of 1844, which endeavoured to safeguard the public against excessive charges. It required that along every line a train must be run each way daily at not less than twelve miles an hour, carrying passengers in covered wagons at not more than one penny a mile. The companies submitted reluctantly to this introduction of comparatively low fares, but speedily found their profit in developing third-class traffic. The Act of 1844 further laid down some suggestions for nationalisation, which have never been developed or acted upon. It prescribed that future railways, if they obtained profits exceeding ten per cent., might be bought by the State on the basis of twenty-five years' purchase of their average profits for three consecutive years. Although this provision has never been applied in any case, it yet has had an important and a demoralising influence on the financial management of British railway

companies; for it acted as an inducement to them to disguise the real extent of their profits by unduly inflating their nominal capital. This has been done not only by flagrant operations of stock watering, but also by habitual failure to make adequate allowance for depreciation and obsolescence. This has combined with other causes (such as the monstrous cost of parliamentary proceedings and excessive prices paid for land) to swell to its monstrous figure the nominal capital of the British railway system, which stands to-day at three times as high as the capital valuation of the Prussian State Railways, which have a longer mileage.

Railway Mania

In 1844, 57 Acts were passed for the construction of 805 miles of railway; in 1845, 120 for 2700 miles. Then came the Railway Mania. In two days George Hudson, the "Railway King," secured the assent of various bodies of shareholders to 40 Bills, involving the expenditure of £10,000,000. November 30, 1845, was the last night for depositing schemes with the Board of Trade for the next parliamentary session, and through the summer every available "engineer," competent or incompetent, was pressed into the service of making surveys and taking levels. During the latter days of November lithographic printers were locked into their workshops day and night, taking brief snatches of repose on the floor when exhausted with fatigue. A wild scramble took place at midnight, November 30, at the Board of Trade offices. Ultimately 270 Bills got through for the construction of 4,538 miles of railway, though many were afterwards abandoned.

The construction of railways proceeded rapidly till 1874, when 16,449 miles were open in the United Kingdom; but less rapidly since, the mileage at the end of 1910 being 23,387.

In speed, comfort, and safety to passengers the British railway system stands high. But it is inordinately dear

judged by foreign standards, and oppressive to many industries towards which it holds a position of monopoly, while the men whom it employs seethe with discontent. The opinion in favour of nationalisation grows, but the magnitude of the operation and the possibility of the supersession of railways by other means of inland transit deter many who would be in favour of the principle.

Ocean Traffic under Steam

The application of steam to sea-going vessels did not linger long after the development of the railway. In 1812 the first steamer ran upon the Clyde, though the river Hudson had seen this phenomenon in 1807. In 1819 the *Savannah* crossed from Georgia to Liverpool, taking thirty-two days on the voyage, and travelling for a part of the journey under sail. The real beginning of the revolution in sea transit ought, perhaps, to be assigned to the date of 1838, when the *Sirius* and the *Great Western* left Cork and Bristol respectively and arrived at New York under steam alone; the *Sirius* taking eighteen days on the journey and travelling at an average speed of seven knots, the *Great Western* doing the journey in fifteen days and exceeding eight knots. Very rapidly new vessels for the Transatlantic trade were built. The size and speed of steamships has not ceased since to grow continually, nor has there been any cessation in the continual improvement of their machinery. In 1907 the net steam tonnage of the United Kingdom was 10,023,000 tons, against 2,256,000 belonging to Germany, 1,117,000 to Japan, and 602,000 (engaged in foreign trade) of the United States.

Transport and Manufacture

Looked at on the industrial side, the revolution in transit was the natural consequence and complement of the revolution in manufacture. The great increase in the power of cheap and rapid production of merchandise necessitated an improvement in the means of transport, which the im-

proved macadamised roads and the canals supplied by the engineers at the end of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries were quite insufficient to supply. Further, the output of the steam-driven factories required ever wider and wider markets to which the improvement in methods of transit gave access. On the other hand, the quickening and cheapening of transport facilitated and even necessitated new developments of manufacturing methods, bringing into existence businesses on a much larger scale and much more complex industrial organisation.

But viewed from a social point of view, the revolution in transit had in many respects an opposite effect on that in manufacture. To a very large extent the introduction of machinery into manufacture caused the labour of women and children to supersede that of men; it produced the demoralising spectacle described by the Manchester Board of Health as "Parents subsisting on the degradation of their offspring." The revolution in transit, on the other hand, created a huge new demand for the labour of adult men, of navvies for the construction of railways, of porters, engine-drivers, signalmen, etc., for the working of the railways; of sailors, dockers, coal-trimmers, stokers, stevedores, for the working of the steamships; it created a great demand for the produce of steel-making and engineering industries, and, in consequence, for the labour of miners, engineers, steel-smelters and the like; it created the great shipbuilding industries of various ports, and so gave employment to a great number of boilermakers, ships' carpenters, and so on. All these industries relied practically exclusively upon the labour of men. They have given us a new aristocracy of labour to take the place of the handloom weavers; and they have done much to raise the wages even of agricultural labourers by offering at the same time increased mobility and an alternative choice of occupation to the young labourer.

It is scarcely necessary to add that it is the revolution in transit quite as much as the revolution in manufacture

that has transformed the face of the country, concentrating the population upon factory towns and mining villages, and leading to a relative and in many parts an absolute depopulation of the agricultural districts. The early progress of the new methods of transit led to the aspiration that Britain should become the workshop of the world. That aspiration appeared likely of realisation when the railways and steamers were carrying the products of the more highly organised British industries into the countries of Europe and Asia which still relied on peasant crafts and hand labour. It became a chimerical ideal when the example of British industrial organisation proved contagious, and the coalfields of Saxony and the Rhine had proved as favourable a habitat for manufacturing industry in the new style as Lancashire and Yorkshire, when Niagara was harnessed to the dynamo, and America gave birth to new and more monstrous forms of industrial organisation. Now we are obliged to realise that the world is to have many workshops outside the British Isles. Yet, viewed absolutely and not comparatively, Britain is becoming still a huger and huger workshop. The development of manufactures and transit have made the people of these islands dependent now for their material prosperity mainly upon the energy produced by coal, instead of that obtained from the sun through the medium of growing crops. Coal-mining instead of agriculture is for us the great extractive industry upon which our economic system rests.

CHAPTER XI

FREE TRADE

Rise of the Free Trade Movement

The great controversy which was fought out in the 'forties over the fiscal policy of the country may be regarded as the natural consequence, either of the industrial development which we sketched in the preceding chapter, or of the political change signalised by the passing of the first Reform Act, or of the stronger hold on men's minds of the doctrines of the political economists, or, again, of the rise to social power and influence of a body of rich men owing their wealth to industry and commerce rather than to land.

It is clear that the growth of the great machine industries when brought into touch with all the world by steam transit, necessitated a very different fiscal system from that which had grown up during a period when the country could be very nearly industrially self-contained and self-dependent, and in which foreign trade was generally valued as a means of drawing the precious metals into the country and so of providing the means of financing armies and fleets. On the other hand the political effect of the Reform Act of 1832 was to compel the land-owning class to share political power to some extent with the commercial and manufacturing classes. It is true that they still retained an enormous superiority. Lord Morley, in the *Life of Cobden,* estimates that four-fifths of the House of Commons represented the land-owning class between 1832 and 1846; but the commercial classes could secure a hearing, and the disproportion in ability and in weight was by no means so great as in numbers.

Equally important was the fact that the teaching of the Manchester School with regard to trade was also the teaching of Adam Smith and of every one who could be regarded as speaking with authority on the subject. Hence the ideas which were expounded in the learned or popular treatises, or in the Chair of University College, or in the Political Economy tales of Harriet Martineau, were on the one hand declaimed by cotton manufacturers, like Cobden and Bright, to great audiences, and on the other found their way into the offices of the Board of Trade and the Treasury, under men like Huskisson and Sir Robert Peel. The great battle for Free Trade was scarcely a battle at all in the region of economic thought and expert opinion; and the victory of Free Trade in this field ultimately secured its triumph in the political field, where it was fought out to a great extent by the great rival interests of land and manufacture or, specifically, of corn and cotton.

The Corn Laws

Mention has already been made of the Corn Law, passed in 1815, which prohibited the import of wheat unless the price on certain specified days had during the preceding six weeks exceeded an average of 80*s*. per quarter. It was hoped in this way to secure that the British corn-grower should be able to obtain this price for his wheat and be able to continue to pay rents fixed in the time of the famine prices during the war. The hope was soon found to be fallacious, and when, in 1822, the limit price was reduced to 70*s*. the change had no practical effect, as the maximum price up to the time of the next change in the law only reached 69*s*.

The Corn Laws of 1815 and 1822 amounted to an almost entire prohibition of the import of wheat. They were thus in harmony with the general fiscal system, which had come down from the eighteenth century, which was marked, as we have seen, by prohibitions on the export of raw material

and of the import of manufactured articles, or by its permission only under very crushing duties.

When Huskisson and Goderich carried out the reforms of 1823 and 1824, they abolished prohibitions and introduced instead a system of moderate duties, somewhat similar in principle to that which has been recommended recently by Mr. Charles Booth, and which appears to be the policy of our modern "Tariff Reformers." The Corn Laws were at that time left alone, but towards the end of the Canning Ministry the device of the Sliding Scale was invented. At 60*s*. importation on wheat was to be allowed with a duty of 20*s*. per quarter; for every rise or fall of 1*s*. in the price there was to be an increase or reduction of 2*s*. in the duty, so that when wheat was at 50*s*. the duty stood at the prohibitive amount of 40*s*.; when the price rose to 70*s*. or upwards, only the registration duty of 1*s*. per quarter was to be imposed. It was thought that this sliding scale on the one hand would maintain wheat pretty steadily at the fairly remunerative price of about 60*s*. per quarter, and that foreign corn would be admitted when really required to make up for a deficiency in the home supply, and that on its admission the duties would assist the revenue. The scheme was an obvious improvement, but it was killed by the strong opposition of the Duke of Wellington.

The Duke of Wellington subsequently carried a sliding scale of a much more complicated character, which also was intended to maintain wheat at a higher level than that aimed at by Canning's abandoned scheme. The duties on imports were to vary as follows—

PRICE.	DUTY.
50*s*.	36*s*. 8*d*.
56*s*.	30*s*. 8*d*.
60*s*.	26*s*. 8*d*.
64*s*.	22*s*. 8*d*.
70*s*.	10*s*. 8*d*.
73*s*.	1*s*. 0*d*.

This was the Corn Law which was in force when the Anti-Corn Law League was founded.

The question of the Corn Laws naturally was urgent in times of scarcity, but faded somewhat into the background in times of plenty. In 1829 the price of wheat was 66*s*., it stood at the same figure in 1831, and then it fell rapidly to 39*s*. in 1835. But the harvests of 1837 and 1838 were bad, and in January 1839 the price reached 80*s*.

The Anti-Corn Law League

Meanwhile what had appeared to London Radicals the most burning political problems had been settled pretty well to their satisfaction by the Reform Act, the new Poor Law and the Municipal Corporations Act. In 1836 an Anti-Corn Law Association was formed by the Parliamentary Radicals—Grote, Molesworth, Joseph Hume and Roebuck being the principal members. But London was not the right centre for the movement, nor had the pinch of hunger been sufficiently felt for the necessary development of passion against the restrictions upon the importation of food to arise. But as the price of wheat rose through the summer of 1838, and the depression after the collapse of the first railway boom shortened wages, a new Anti-Corn Law Association was formed in Manchester in October 1838. In the following January it appealed for large subscriptions. "Let us," said Richard Cobden, "invest part of our property in order to save the rest from confiscation." From the Manchester Association was formed the celebrated Anti-Corn Law League, an affiliation of many local associations. Very soon large sums of money were raised, and simultaneously an attempt was made to move the Whig Government under Lord Melbourne to take up the question. Lord Melbourne bluntly declared that nothing could be done unless there were a very strong force of public opinion behind the demand. Seeing to what an extent the owners of agricultural land

still dominated Parliament, there can be no doubt that Lord Melbourne was perfectly right.

It was soon seen that the battle would be a long and difficult one. But on the other hand the cotton manufacturers who formed the backbone of the league were urged forwards by a variety of powerful motives. In the first place their investigations showed them that the export of British manufactures to the less developed countries of the Continent was considerably hampered by the fiscal system which hindered such countries from paying for British goods in wheat and timber. Secondly, they recognised that the example of Great Britain, the home of Adam Smith and of the economic doctrine of Free Trade, in belying the principles which were taught on the Continent on the authority of English economists, was an incentive to foreign governments to develop protective systems specially calculated to prevent importation of British manufactures. Thirdly, they recognised that the efficiency of labour depended to a great extent upon the well-being of the labourer, and that high prices of food, unless met by correspondingly higher wages, must result in impaired powers of work in the operative and in heavier rates. These were all business considerations, but over and above any question of private interest, the Free Traders were convinced that they were fighting for the welfare of the whole British population just as much as for their own business interests, and moreover that they stood for a principle of trade which tended towards universal peace and the development of friendly relations between all the nations of the earth. Nor does it in fact seem possible to me to assert that they were wrong in any one of these beliefs. Hence the Free Traders were able to combine comparatively selfish class-interests with other motives springing from philanthropy and patriotism, a combination which tended to give them that combination of moral fervour, efficient organisation, and shrewd political tactics, which made the Anti-Corn Law League one of the most

effective organisations which has ever taken part in British political history. Neither money nor ability was wanting.

In 1839 the campaign began with the sending of a body of lecturers through the towns and villages of England, Scotland and Wales. In many places these missionaries met with very rough treatment; but soon they began to find out that even among the agricultural districts there were plenty of people to welcome their teaching. Whatever were the benefits of the Corn Laws to the industry of agriculture as a whole, the actual working agriculturist saw very little of them. The agricultural labourer was perhaps in about as miserable a condition as his class had ever endured in this country. The labourer was, in fact, suffering from the combined evil effects of the old campaign against the independence of the labourer which we have described above, and from the demoralising influence of the early nineteenth-century administration of the Poor Law, and also from the harsh repression of the new Poor Law of 1834. Their cry had been "Give us back our commons, and we will do without relief." Outdoor relief had been taken from them, but no commons had been returned. The idea that wages would immediately rise to a normal and reasonable standard when no longer supplemented out of the parish rates, had utterly failed of realisation. Something between 7*s*. and 9*s*. a week was the average wage of the agricultural labourer throughout the South of England, a wage that meant practical starvation for labourers with families every time the price of wheat rose over 60*s*. a quarter.

The Repeal of the Corn Laws

In 1840 the Whig Government, which was passing into decrepitude, began to dally with the idea of Free Trade. A committee was appointed to consider import duties, and it recommended that the Huskisson policy of moderate

duties on an immense number of articles should be further reformed by sweeping away the taxes on the great majority of such articles, and retaining only duties on a small number of commodities chosen so as to secure the largest possible revenue with the least possible interference with trade. This was the policy afterwards adopted by Sir Robert Peel. In 1841 a budget, to some extent framed on this report, was introduced. With regard to corn, Lord John Russell moved for the abolition of the sliding scale and for the substitution of a fixed 8*s*. duty. Before the budget was voted, however, Sir Robert Peel carried a vote of want of confidence in the Government and the dissolution of 1841 took place. Sir Robert Peel came back at the head of a Conservative majority of 91, and among the new members returned was Richard Cobden.

The fiscal reform, which was advocated by the report of 1840, then fell into the abler hands of Sir Robert Peel. He found in the list of Customs duties 1,150 different rates of duties enumerated, while there was one comprehensive tax on unenumerated articles. His budget sacrificed a Customs revenue of two and a half million pounds, and it abated the duty on 769 articles. The general principle was that all raw materials and all semi-manufactured articles should be imported under nominal duties only, and that the duties on manufactured articles should not be prohibitive; sugar was left untouched; but a new sliding scale of duties on corn was introduced similar to Canning's defeated proposals of 1827. At 64*s*. the duty on wheat was to be 8*s*., at lower rates the duty was to rise to the same extent as the price fell, but with a maximum duty of 20*s*., at 70*s*. the duty was to be 5*s*. Some years ago such a proposal would have been welcomed as liberal. Now, after the vigorous propaganda of the League and the extreme distress that had prevailed in the cotton trade in 1841, the Minister's proposals were denounced by the Free Traders as a bitter insult to a suffering people.

In order to meet the temporary loss of revenue caused

by the readjustment, Sir Robert Peel revived the income-tax, which had not been levied since 1816.

In the next few years the subject of the Corn Law was continually under debate, both in Parliament and all over the country, but on the whole the Free Traders apparently lost rather than gained in the period of somewhat better harvests that followed. But meanwhile a change was going on in Sir Robert Peel's convictions on the subject. Associated as he was with manufacture, being the son of a cotton manufacturer, and trained in the study of finance and trade, he was always disposed to have an open mind for Free Trade arguments. The special change in his opinion that took place between 1842 and 1845, was that he became convinced that it was a fallacy to suppose that wages would automatically rise with a rise in the cost of provisions.

Meanwhile the country party had carried, in the teeth of the manufacturers' opposition, the Factory Act of 1844. It is very curious to note in the pages of *Hansard* how curiously the questions of factory regulation and of corn taxes were interwoven in parliamentary debate. The Free Traders taunted the land-owners with the miserable wages paid to the agricultural labourers, and with the fact that their rents were swollen by the excessive prices taken from the very poorest of the population for the necessities of life. The land-owners could make no effective direct reply, so they in turn reproached the manufacturers for drawing their profits out of the toil of miserable children beaten in order to make them keep pace with the machines. When Parliament had intervened to protect the operative, the argument became more one-sided. It was still more one-sided because the manufacturers after 1842 could urge that they had been deprived of the protection which the fiscal system had previously given them, and that they had accepted the alteration willingly. The last new element in the situation was that the farmers began to doubt whether protection was any benefit to them, and

to suspect that they lost more in rising rents than they gained in enhanced prices.

In the autumn of 1845 it became known that the potato crop in Ireland was a disastrous failure. On October 31 the Cabinet met to consider the situation. Sir Robert Peel advised the suspension of all restrictions upon the importation of food, but the Cabinet could not agree, and separated without coming to a conclusion. On November 22 Lord John Russell published a letter to his constituents in the city of London denouncing the Corn Law as the blight of commerce, the bane of agriculture, the source of bitter enmity between class and class, the cause of penury, mortality and crime. He declared for the total and immediate repeal of the Corn Laws. Again Peel summoned his Cabinet, again he failed to induce them to accept any definite policy. The activity of the League became incessant, and public opinion among all classes, except those directly interested in land ownership, became practically unanimous.

On December 5 Sir Robert Peel resigned office, and the Queen sent for Lord John Russell, but he failed to form a Government. Sir Robert Peel had to return and to be prepared to carry the policy to which he had been converted, if necessary by the help of his political opponents. By May the repeal had been carried through the House of Commons, and the Peers acquiesced in the position. But in June the combination of Whigs and Protectionists defeated the Government, and Sir Robert Peel resigned.

Results of Free Trade

The policy of Free Trade was apparently successful. The following table gives an indication of the result of the policy inaugurated in 1842 and more fully put into execution in 1846.

YEAR	BRITISH EXPORTS IN MILLION £	TOTAL FOREIGN TRADE IN MILLION £
1830	42	90
1842	60	130
1850	90	190
1860	164	375
1872	315	669

For about thirty years from 1846 the manufactures and foreign trade of the country had a period of expansion such as had never before been known, and greater than has been experienced since. With the development of trade there also came an increase in wages and in the general well-being. Even agriculture enjoyed far greater prosperity than during the previous period of protection; for foreign imports of food only supplemented and did not displace home supplies in the work of feeding the rapidly growing urban population.

It is true that many other causes besides the change in fiscal policy contributed to this enhanced prosperity; and indeed at least one of them was of superior importance. The greatest influence of all, no doubt, was the development of the means of ocean transit and the building of railways, both in the British Isles and elsewhere. Closely allied with this influence was the discovery of gold in California and Australia in the years 1848 and 1849. There was a sudden upward leap in consequence in the world's annual gold production, from $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions to over 30 millions. This directly affected Britain more than any other country, as being the greatest gold-using country. It tended to make all figures relating to trade and the production of wealth somewhat fallacious; for these are necessarily measured in values reckoned by pounds sterling, and as prices rose with the increased production of gold, a pound sterling became a smaller unit of value. Further, the steadily rising prices acted as a direct stimulus to production, by reducing the burden of all fixed charges

on the industrialist. Again the combined effect of the gold discoveries and the improvement in the means of communication was to stimulate emigration, to create great new markets for British goods, to increase the sources of the supply of raw materials and thereby to increase the demand for labour, while also offering an alternative to the labourer to living and working at home.

But while it would be a great mistake to attribute the great commercial and manufacturing prosperity which followed to Free Trade alone, it would be an equally absurd mistake to deny some part in the creation of that prosperity to the removal of the fiscal fetters that had previously hampered the importation of food. A very little consideration will show, for example, how heavily Corn Laws like that of 1815, which prohibited the import of wheat till the price was 80*s*., or that of 1828, which would have levied a duty of 36*s*. on every quarter imported when the price was as low as 50*s*., would have pressed upon the British artisan and the urban labourer during the second half of the nineteenth century if they had been maintained. It is difficult to conceive how in any circumstance it could be wise for the Government of two small islands, with a crowded population, but with extraordinary potentialities for manufacture, to endeavour to restrict the population to the food grown upon its own surface. But if for any reasons of overmastering importance it were necessary to adopt such a policy, at least such a Government ought to secure that the land should be put to its fullest possible agricultural use. Before 1846, and since, the British Government has acquiesced in the sacrifice of the agricultural interests of the country to the sporting proclivities of the land-owners. The combination of the two policies of protective duties for corn and of game laws and fox-preserving, would be nothing short of a vile oppression of the community as a whole for the selfish pleasure of a very small minority.

But again, on the other hand, it must be pointed out

that other considerations have entered into the later controversy which has arisen over the proposal to reimpose duties on imported food, combined with colonial preference. If this proposal be put in a form which would allow of free import of cereals and other necessary foodstuffs from all parts of the British Empire, the proposal may be wise or unwise, but it is not necessarily condemned for the same reasons that made the system in vogue before 1846 indefensible. It is one thing to restrict a thickly populated manufacturing country to its own food supplies; it is quite another thing to propose such a restriction for an empire of enormous area containing millions of acres of fertile and undeveloped land.

The Irish Famine and Free Trade

When we turn from the case of Great Britain to that of Ireland, it is much more difficult to be complacent over the results of the repeal of the Corn Laws. It is indeed an ironically melancholy circumstance that the Irish famine was the immediate occasion of the abolition of agricultural protection. The fact that Ireland had free access to the British market with its artificially enhanced prices, caused, between 1780 and 1845, a development of corn-growing in that country which has been regarded as excessive in view of the fact that Ireland is much more suited by climate for pasture than for the growing of either wheat or barley, though the grain chiefly grown was oats, for which the climate of Ireland is suitable. This artificial stimulus to tillage created a great field for employment in the land, and, combined with the political forces which fostered the creation of small holdings, it developed a system whereby the Irish peasant paid his rent out of small patches of oats, wheat and barley, and subsisted on still smaller patches of potato.

When the potato famine came there was still far more food grown in Ireland than was necessary for the feeding of all the people. The people starved, not in consequence

of a deficiency in the total quantity of food, but purely because their contracts with the landlords compelled them to send the food out of the country, instead of consuming it themselves. The exports of cereals in 1845 from Ireland were 779,000 quarters of wheat and flour, 93,000 of barley, 2,353,000 of oats and oatmeal, sufficient to feed four million people for twelve months. The policy adopted by the British Government of enforcing the collection of rents and consequently the exportation of food required to feed the people, encouraging voluntary charitable subscriptions in money, and then altering the whole fiscal system of the country in order that these charitable donations should be expended to greater advantage, was miserably ineffective.

Its deplorable failure was aggravated by the abject subjection in which the minds of the administrators were held by the doctrines laid down by the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834—that no relief should be given except to the destitute. When the peasantry could have been effectively helped, help was denied them; when they were reduced to a condition of utter weakness by starvation they were offered relief work. It is sufficiently obvious at this day that the only reasonable policy would have been to have prohibited the export of food, or to have retained a sufficient quantity in the country by State purchase, and to have suspended for a sufficient period the payment of rent. This would have prevented loss of life, and even minimised the ultimate loss of rent to the landlords. But in the then condition of opinion it was practically impossible for such a policy to be conceived, much more for it to be carried out.

The population of Ireland at the census of 1841 was 8,175,124. At the outbreak of the famine it was probably about 8,500,000. At the census of 1851 it was 6,552,385. Famine, fever following famine, and the panic-stricken flight to America, reduced the population by about two million souls. Very many who emigrated reached America

only to die. No single cause has contributed so much to aggravate relations between Great Britain and Ireland as the incompetence displayed in dealing with the famine.

But after 1851 the depopulation of Ireland continued, and one important factor was the loss of the privileged position enjoyed by the Irish agriculturist in the English market under the Corn Laws. The acreage under oats fell from 2,189,000 in 1851 to 1,066,000 in 1905; that under corn crops generally from 3,099,000 to 1,271,000. Every decennial census has continued to show a decreasing population, though there are signs that the tide is now turning.

CHAPTER XII

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT FROM 1825 TO 1855

Trade Union Consolidation

We have previously said that the vigorous development of trade unionism characteristic of the boom of trade which happened to coincide with the partial legalisation of labour organisation in 1824 and 1825 was followed by a general collapse when the financial panic came at the end of the latter year, and that when the fresh impulse came it was marked by different ideals and different methods.

It was widely felt that the small local trade club, confined to workers in a particular craft in or around a particular industrial centre, was too small and feeble to carry on a prolonged dispute with the employers, or even to have, as a rule, much permanence or solidity in quiet times. The aspiration grew in the period of trade union depression, which began in the autumn of 1825, for very much wider and larger forms of combination. The pioneer of the new movement appears to have been John Doherty, already mentioned through his later connection with the Short Time movement—a Roman Catholic Irishman who had started work in a cotton mill in Antrim at the age of 10, but who migrated to Manchester in 1816 and then, though only 17 years of age, became Secretary to a local Cotton Spinners' Society. In 1829 he led a great strike of the cotton spinners of Hyde against a reduction of rates, which failed after a stubborn struggle lasting over six months. This convinced him that no local union could

succeed against a combination of employers, and he succeeded in organising a delegates' meeting of the spinners' societies of England, Scotland and Ireland, which was held at Ramsey in the Isle of Man in December 1829. The "Grand General Union of the United Kingdom" was formed, to include all male spinners and piecers, women and girls being urged to form a separate organisation. The attempt to combine the spinners of all three kingdoms proved a failure. The Union became merely a federation of Lancashire societies, and speedily sank into insignificance, though not until considerable progress had been made in fixing standard rates throughout Lancashire, and in compelling many of the worst employers to come up to the standard set by the better ones. But meanwhile Doherty was pressing forward the idea of a much larger association. In February 1830 there was formed at his instigation the "National Association for the Protection of Labour." This was a sort of federation of trade unions which included about 150 separate societies, many of textile workers, but also many of miscellaneous trades. A weekly newspaper, called *The Voice of the People*, appeared as its organ in January 1831. Unfortunately, Doherty and his Executive Committee quarrelled, and before the year was over *The Voice of the People* ceased to appear. In its place Doherty started *The Poor Man's Advocate* in January 1832, and endeavoured to build up a new national association on the basis of those branches which had most life left in them.

The same idea of a widespread national association, though with a somewhat more limited scope, was embodied in the Builders' Union, which included joiners, masons, bricklayers, plasterers, plumbers, painters and builders' labourers, and which endeavoured to cover the whole country. During 1832 it grew rapidly in Lancashire and the Midlands, and in June 1833 it entered into a great struggle with the Liverpool and Manchester employers for the abolition of contracting, the limitation of appren-

tices, and the prohibition of machinery and piece-work. The employers met these demands by a device which afterwards became famous as "the presentation of the document," a demand from every man applying for work that he should sign a renunciation of trade unionism in all its forms.

After the political excitement on the passing of the Reform Act had died down, the favourable condition of trade produced by good harvests and by the beginnings of railway development, which marked the years from 1832 to 1835, stimulated a very great increase of trade-union activity. The Builders' Union in September 1833 determined on building a magnificent Guildhall in Birmingham, to contain a lecture-hall and school-rooms for the children of members. The Cotton Spinners improved their organisation and began to plan a general strike for a forty-eight hours week with undiminished wages. The Leeds Clothiers began an aggressive policy; the Potters' Union, established by Doherty in 1830, numbered, by the autumn of 1833, 8000 members. Not only to Doherty but also to Robert Owen the time seemed ripe for the fullest expressions of the general principle of labour solidarity. Various attempts were made in 1833 to form a general union of all sorts of workers, and in January 1834 there was started the "Grand National Consolidated Trades Union." It was to be a federation of separate lodges, each lodge to be as a rule a local organisation of workers in a particular trade, though provision was made for miscellaneous lodges for men and also for women. The movement spread like fire in a field of stubble; it swept as far north as Dundee; it included many classes of workers that had always been found very difficult to organise—shop-assistants, agricultural labourers and women. Its avowed policy was to inaugurate a general strike of all wage-earners throughout the country for an eight-hours day. But the general struggle never came. While preparations were being made for it the union found

itself harassed by local and sectional disputes which it could neither prevent nor bring to a successful termination.

The Dorsetshire Labourers

The governing classes, however, were very seriously alarmed, and their alarm expressed itself in an act of flagrant tyranny and injustice in March 1834. Six labourers of Tolpuddle, in Dorsetshire, determined to form a lodge of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union. For this purpose they obtained some masonic apparatus and entered into curious ceremonies. They were charged under an Act passed at the time of the sailors' mutiny at the Nore, with "administering oaths," and they were sentenced to seven years' transportation. A huge demonstration of protest took place in London on what is known as "The day of the trades," and Harriet Martineau tells us that in government circles it was believed that this demonstration masked a project for a bloody revolution, which was only checkmated by the precaution of concentrating vast numbers of troops on the streets traversed, but keeping them carefully hidden from the view of the mob. These fears were certainly founded on delusion, but the fact that they were entertained illustrates how great was the severance in spirit between the Government and the labouring people. Years elapsed before the Dorsetshire labourers were pardoned and brought back to England. In July 1834 began a general lock-out, accompanied by "the presentation of the document," in the London building trade. Other lock-outs followed in various centres, and by the end of the year the great trades union which had seemed so formidable was practically killed. The first great effort to create wider forms of combination had failed completely.

The Transition to Political Action

Meanwhile some of the general organisations which had been established, probably largely with the idea of definite

industrial organisation, like the "National Union of the Working Classes" and the "Society for National Regeneration," became mere propagandist bodies, aiming at the advance of education or at other reforms for which the assistance of enlightened and philanthropic employers could be enlisted. From this to political propaganda the step was easy. Thus, for example, the "National Union of the Working Classes" started as a Carpenters' Society, and then became a national organisation working both before and after the passage of the Reform Act for Manhood Suffrage. From this, again, there sprang the "London Working Men's Association," created in June 1836 with William Lovett, a carpenter from Cornwall, for its secretary. This was the body which fathered the celebrated Charter drafted by Lovett on the suggestion of Francis Place, with its six points—Manhood Suffrage (Adult Suffrage in the first draft), Equal Electoral Districts, Abolition of the Property Qualification for Members of Parliament, Payment of Members, Vote by Ballot, and Annual Parliaments. The Chartist Movement, which was thus originated, was perhaps, on the whole, the most confused and chaotic of political movements, yet one which took a deep hold on the hearts of the people.

Chartism

From the very beginning there were two definite strains of thought and feeling blended in Chartism. William Lovett, the Secretary of the Chartist Convention, which lasted from February to September 1839, beginning in London and concluding in Birmingham, was a typical representative of London Radical artisans. This body of men was comparatively well paid, pretty well accustomed to the conduct of trade unions of a somewhat exclusive type, desirous of limiting their demands to that which was practicable and their methods to such as were constitutional. They had maintained through many struggles and difficulties a fairly high standard of comfort, and they

were prepared to struggle strenuously for the means of education for themselves and their children. They were also fairly well in touch with the parliamentary Radicals through such channels of communication as Francis Place.

But while the London artisans framed the Charter, the idea was taken up with far greater fervour in the manufacturing towns of the north, where by this time the handloom weavers had been crushed into hopeless poverty and misery, and the rising generation of the workers had been trained in the brutalising school of the unregulated factories of the beginning of the century. While Lovett formed the London Working Men's Association, Feargus O'Connor, who had been Member of Parliament for Cork, but who had been thrown out for lacking the necessary property qualification, appeared in Oldham, and, after being handsomely defeated in a parliamentary contest, formed the Central Committee of Radical Unions in 1836. In November 1837 he began to publish the *Northern Star,* and made it the channel for the denunciation of the new Poor Law, for the advocacy of all trade-union efforts, and of political reform. In 1838 the northern and the southern current met, and Feargus O'Connor became the acknowledged leader of the whole movement. The policy definitely adopted was the revival of that urged twenty years earlier by Cobbett, viz. that all sorts of social and industrial ideals should be temporarily postponed in order that every effort should be made to secure the Charter. Once the Charter had been obtained men could turn with some hope to remedy their crying grievances—low wages, high prices of food, insanitary conditions, denial of educational opportunities and other forms of industrial oppression.

But it was one thing to resolve to get votes before going for the cheap loaf and other desirable things; it was quite another thing to see how votes could be won by the voteless. Public meetings obviously could be held, monster petitions could be presented to Parliament, resolutions

could be carried and forwarded to the Member for the district and to the Prime Minister, and even, as O'Connor was showing, a local newspaper could be established with a larger circulation than any other paper outside London. But all these methods of constitutional agitation, so effective when exercised by voters, it was shrewdly suspected would fail in their effect when it was known that the petitioners and demonstrators could do nothing to turn out a single Member of Parliament. Hence the great cleft of opinion that speedily arose between the advocates of physical force and moral force; a division of opinion which could not be satisfactorily settled. If it was perfectly clear to the physical force Chartists that constitutional methods were bound to be ineffective; it was equally clear to those of the other opinion that rioting and attempts at rebellion were even more hopeless in view of the overwhelming power of the Government, supported by drilled troops who were certain to obey orders to shoot, and led by officers who were not likely to hesitate to give such orders.

Between the two wings of the Chartist Movement Feargus O'Connor held an unenviable and undignified position. He attempted to secure their union and co-operation by using violent language to appease one section, and privately urging moderation in action to appease the other. Meanwhile he was the victim of an insidious brain disease which gradually robbed him of self-control and made him a dipsomaniac, and which finally brought about his death in a lunatic asylum.

If there was great doubt among the Chartists as to the relative merits of constitutional and violent methods, there was no doubt on the part of the Government that the most effective way of dealing with the Chartists was to goad them into violence and then to use harsh methods of repression.

One of the chief speakers of the constitutional wing was Henry Vincent, who afterwards had a long and honourable career as a public lecturer. In 1839 he went to South

Wales to lecture and to urge moderation and order, but he failed to prevent a small riot in Newport, and was arrested on the charge of inciting to riot after his return to London. He was taken to Monmouth Assizes and was sentenced to a year's imprisonment. A great body of miners, variously calculated at from eight to twenty thousand men, marched towards Newport gaol in order to rescue him. They were met by the troops; ten were killed and fifty were injured. In March 1840 O'Connor was tried at York for seditious libel and sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment. The same sentence was inflicted on Bronterre O'Brien, one of the chief speakers of the physical force wing, in April. William Lovett had also been sentenced about the same time as Henry Vincent, and by other sentences it was clearly shown that the Government intended to stamp out the agitation.

Decline of Chartism

In 1842 a fresh and most promising effort was made by Joseph Sturge, a business man and Quaker of Birmingham, who had shown the stubbornness of his convictions by refusing to serve in the militia or to pay a substitute, and by refusing as a tradesman to deal in corn if the purchaser intended to use it for brewing or distilling. He perceived that the extension of the franchise could only be carried through the co-operation of those who already possessed votes, and that in order to carry on a successful campaign it was necessary that the leadership of the movement should be put into other hands than those of O'Connor. He summoned in 1842 the Complete Suffrage Conference, but his efforts were foiled by O'Connor.

During the next few years Chartism began to fade under the influence of reviving trade and cheaper food. It also suffered from an influence which had been working against it throughout its existence, viz. the competition of the Anti-Corn Law League. There was the greatest contrast between the efficiency with which the League was conducted,

and the confusion which reigned in Chartist circles; between the harmony that reigned among the Free Trade leaders, and the fierce personal quarrels that hampered the working-class movement; between the enormous financial resources which the League could depend upon, and the utter poverty of the rival movement. Moreover, as the prospects of victory for the immediate practical end of the cheap loaf became nearer, it was less and less effective for Chartist speakers to point out either that, if Manhood Suffrage had been won, it would be quite easy to get the abolition of the Corn Laws with all sorts of other reforms, or, on the other hand, to urge that the manufacturers only wanted cheaper food in order that they might be able to pay smaller wages. The immediate possible and very practical boon was more attractive than the wider demand which seemed to have so little chance of realisation.

After the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 O'Connor endeavoured to give Chartism an immediate practical attraction by forming a Land Company to buy estates and to cut them up into small holdings to be balloted for by the Chartists who joined the scheme. Five estates were bought and thus divided, and a special organ, *The Labourer,* was started to assist the movement. In 1847 O'Connor was elected to Parliament for Nottingham. The following year, under the influence of contemporary continental revolutionary movements, which have caused the year 1848 to be remembered in history as a year of revolution, and of bad harvests which sent up the average price of wheat to over 70*s*. a quarter, the final outburst of Chartist activity took place. A great meeting was summoned for April 10, 1848. O'Connor, with the giant petition, said to have been signed by 5,000,000 persons, was to be escorted from Kennington Common to Westminster by a crowd sufficient to overawe Parliament. But the forces arrayed against the demonstrators were too great. The procession was abandoned and the petition went to the House of Commons in a solitary cab. It was found to

contain not 5,000,000 signatures, but only 1,975,496; and the clerks put to count the signatures were able to find among this number, and to hold up to public scorn and derision, a few which were obviously not genuine. This was considered a sufficient justification for laughing out of court a petition signed by nearly two million persons, many of whom had laboured strenuously and suffered much for the cause.

The Results of Chartism

After 1848 Chartism, as a movement, was practically dead. A new development of trade unionism was already rising in importance, the motto of which was "No Politics in the Trade Union." In the North of England, also, much enthusiasm was diverted into the co-operative movement. The period of rapid commercial development was favourable to efforts for the direct amelioration of the workmen's position by voluntary association. One of the Chartist leaders alone continued doggedly lecturing and agitating. This was Ernest Jones, who had only joined the Chartists in 1846, but who brought into the movement a spirit he had shown even as a schoolboy, when at the age of eleven he ran away from a Berlin school to join the Polish insurgents. He never ceased his efforts till the Reform Act of 1867, which gave household franchise to the boroughs, conceded something to the democratic claims, and made further concessions inevitable.

We have already dealt upon the contrast between the rival movements of the 'forties, Chartism and the Anti-Corn Law League, in the character of their leaders and in the forces which they respectively enlisted. The contrast is equally remarkable in their ultimate results. The Anti-Corn Law League was immediately and brilliantly successful, but its success may not prove to be permanent. The broad principle upon which it rested, the principle of *laisser-faire,* has lost its prestige as the guiding principle in the general policy of the State in relation to industry,

and its special application to the question for foreign trade and tariffs is challenged by a powerful party backed up by a very considerable weight of expert opinion. On the other hand, the principles underlying the Charter have never ceased since 1848 to advance from one partial victory to another. Already the majority of Englishmen are enfranchised, the question of complete manhood suffrage is under debate in Parliament, complete adult suffrage is strongly demanded, the principle of equality of voting strength for voters is no longer openly contested, payment of Members is a fact, and the abolition of the property qualification and vote by ballot have long been established. There remains only one point of the Charter—annual Parliaments, and this is no longer demanded. Further, the principle behind the demand for annual Parliaments has, to a large extent, been conceded by repeated efforts to bring representatives more and more into close touch with their constituents, and converting them from being free representatives, entitled to vote on all subjects under discussion in accordance with their own opinion, into something intermediate between this and the position of delegates obliged to vote according to the mandate of those from whom they received their commission.

The development of this form of parliamentary democracy has, in fact, been one of the most important lines of progress of Modern England since 1848. How far a democratic spirit has come with the form of democracy is another question.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CAMPAIGN FOR PUBLIC HEALTH, 1832 TO 1854

Sanitary Conditions of London in the Eighteenth Century

If the history of London were typical of that of the rest of the country, the nadir of public health would probably have to be fixed at about the year 1730. It is true that there were no great epidemics in London in the eighteenth century comparable with the Black Death in the fourteenth century, the Sweating Sickness in the sixteenth century, and the Great Plague of the seventeenth. But on the whole it would appear that apart from epidemics the average condition of health and of mortality from endemic diseases continually grew worse as the city grew larger and as its site became continuously more polluted by the accumulation of the filth of generations. Right through the eighteenth century London deaths far exceeded the births—

Year	Births in London	Deaths	Estimated Death-rate
1710	15,623	21,461	38·3
1720	17,111	23,909	41·9
1730	18,203	27,492	47·4
1740	16,830	26,492	43·7
1750	14,457	25,352	40·9
1760	17,156	22,001	33·8
1770	19,784	24,943	36·1
1780	19,248	23,851	32·2
1790	21,477	23,080	28·8
1800	22,605	24,270	28·2

An important movement for sanitary reform and city

improvement began in the middle of the eighteenth century. In 1764 the City Commission of Sewers reported to the Corporation that the pavements were very defective, that the gutters which ran down the middle of the streets were deep and dangerous to vehicles, that the practice of throwing refuse into the streets was inconvenient and insanitary, that the footways, not being raised above the roadway, were naturally overflowed with mud, that various obstructions impeded the proper use of the streets, that projecting signs obstructed the free passage of air, that the waterspouts from the old houses poured streams upon the heads of passers-by in rainy weather, and that it was desirable that houses should be numbered. The movement for City reform displayed itself in the building of new bridges,[1] in considerable street improvements, and in continual efforts, repeated again and again, to supplement the work of the New River Company with additional arrangements for providing a suitable and adequate water supply. There followed a movement for the building of new districts on more regular lines, and with greater attention to the disposal of sewage. Innumerable District Commissions for paving, sewering and lighting parishes or parts of parishes outside the City were created.

The old Sewer Commissions, which dated from the time of the Tudors, had been created for the purpose of dealing with storm water, and were not expected to receive house drainage into their sewers. It was, in fact, a punishable offence for a builder to connect his drains with the sewers instead of building a private cesspool. But although it was an offence, builders in the London district frequently managed to secure the permission of the Commissioners to make such connections, and when cesspools were constructed it was a common practice for the men employed to empty them to take the contents to the nearest

[1] Westminster Bridge was begun in 1738, opened in 1750; Blackfriars Bridge begun in 1761, finished in 1769; the houses on London Bridge were removed in 1757–8.

inlet to the sewers. Frequently the sewers were faulty in design and construction. It was long afterwards discovered, for example, that the celebrated sewer of the Westminster Commission, of which the Commissioners had been so proud when it was constructed that they marched in procession through it decked in all their insignia, had an upward instead of a downward slope towards the Thames, so that in course of time its sides gave way before the pressure of the liquid filth that accumulated at its lowest point, and a great continually spreading lake of sewage was formed beneath some of the most highly esteemed residential parts of London.

Defective, however, as were both the sanitary engineering of the end of the eighteenth century and the arrangements for local administration, the increased concern for the care of health produced a continually falling death-rate from 1730 onwards, and the deaths fell below the births at the beginning of the nineteenth century for the first time for over a hundred years. The improvement begun in the middle of the eighteenth century has continued to the present day.

Sanitary Conditions of Provincial Towns

But if we turn from London to the country we find that in the great provincial towns the sanitary conditions were deteriorating instead of improving at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. The aggregation of population in great factory, industrial and seaport towns, which was a natural consequence of the development of manufacture by the aid of steam power, and of the improvement of transit, acted as a most powerful influence for the deterioration of the national health. The population continually flowed from the comparatively healthy rural districts to the growing towns. A helpless and ignorant working population overcrowded densely the courts and alleys already existing, while speculative builders hurried to meet the demand for additional accom-

modation by rushing up new erections, uncontrolled by building by-laws or sanitary inspection. Such working-class quarters had but the most meagre provision of sanitary conveniences, usually no system of drainage, and no water supply, while no scavenger's cart ever visited their courts to remove refuse, unless it were the case that the landlord derived a profit from the sale of the mounds of filth, which were frequently heaped up in the centre of the courts, to be sold to the farmers of the neighbourhood for manure. Hence the very towns which were most rapidly growing in the beginning of the nineteenth century were also as rapidly deteriorating. A typical example is Glasgow, which in 1821 had a death-rate of twenty-eight per thousand, in 1838 of thirty-eight per thousand, and in 1843 of forty per thousand. In this city no less that 62,051 typhus cases appeared in the five years ending in 1840, the population then being only about a quarter of a million.

The Coming of Cholera

There was need that some great movement should arise for sanitary reform. The Manchester Board of Health, formed in 1784, was the most active of several local movements for inquiry, protest, and agitation for remedial action. But a definite stimulus was needed to operate upon the popular imagination, and this stimulus was supplied in the repeated visits of the cholera. This dreaded plague, but most helpful and valuable sanitary inspector, first attracted the attention of Europeans in consequence of its ravages in India in the year 1817. From time to time it spread northwards and westwards; but it did not actually reach England till the 31st of October 1831, when it appeared in Sunderland, making its way by the following January to London. We have no accurate knowledge of the amount of the destruction which the first visitation caused. The number of deaths may be put approximately at about fifty thousand, but this is not much more than a guess. The official registration of births and deaths for

the country as a whole had not yet been instituted. Nor can we specify any definite preventive action taken at the time, beyond that of prayer in the churches. The great value of the first epidemic lay in the fact that the terror it excited acted as a stimulus to preventive effort when on subsequent occasions it was known that the disease was again making its way from one city of Europe to another nearer and nearer to our shores, and in the opportunity it gave to the great pioneer of sanitary reform.

Edwin Chadwick

Charles Kingsley in his novel *Two Years Ago* depicts the efforts of his hero, Tom Thurnall, to fight the cholera in a little Devonshire fishing village. The prototype of Tom Thurnall was Edwin Chadwick, but the fight which he carried on was over the whole national field, and against all sorts of filth diseases, and not cholera merely. Edwin Chadwick had a brief but most crowded career. We have already mentioned his connection with the Royal Commission on the factory question which led to the first Factory Law for the control of factories. He was next made an Assistant Commissioner to the Poor Law Commission of Inquiry, and when the administrative Commission was established he was appointed its paid secretary. He had a stormy time with his official superiors, but he succeeded in making them his implement for securing an investigation into the sanitary conditions of the country. He had already, as an Assistant Commissioner, been struck by the fact that a great deal of the pauperism which the new Poor Law was passed to combat was directly due to preventable diseases, which created destitute widows and orphans, threw men out of work and burdened family exchequers during the period of sickness; while the very insanitary conditions of housing and living which caused disease, also created listlessness, mental inertia and a craving for alcoholic stimulants, even in men well enough to be able to work.

The passing of the new Poor Law in 1834 was followed by the Act of 1837 for the Registration of Births and Deaths, creating the office of the Registrar General and providing for the appointment of local Registrars for districts based on the Poor Law Unions. This provided a continually recurring reminder to the whole community to consider the questions of life and death, health and disease. Whether the passing of the Act was directly or indirectly prompted by Chadwick, I do not know. It certainly provided him with a weapon that he was not slow to use. In 1837 he obtained reports from Drs. Arnott and Kay "on the prevalence of certain physical causes of fever in the Metropolis"; and a further report by Dr. Southwood Smith, then physician to the London fever hospital, "On some of the physical causes of sickness and mortality to which the poor are peculiarly exposed and which are capable of removal by sanitary regulations."

These were presented to the Home Secretary by the Poor Law Commission. They were further followed up by another report by Dr. Southwood Smith "On the prevalence of fever in twenty Metropolitan unions or parishes," and at last, in August 1839, the Home Secretary, Lord John Russell, was induced to direct the Poor Law Commissioners to make a general inquiry throughout the country as to the extent to which the evils depicted in London also prevailed in other parts of England and Wales.

This gave Chadwick his great opportunity. He sent directions to all the Assistant Commissioners to investigate the conditions of housing in their respective districts, the proportion of rent paid to weekly wages, the improvements that might be found in any model cottages erected, and the possibility of reform by means of Building Acts. He further asked for information about water supply, refuse removal, conditions of drainage, and the condition of the lodging houses. He himself supplemented the inquiries of the Assistant Commissioners by his own

researches in some of the larger provincial cities; and finally, in 1842, published his "Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Classes of Great Britain." He then set to work to secure for it the widest possible distribution.

Meanwhile a "Health of Towns Association" had been formed in 1839 with the Rev. Charles Girdlestone, R. A. Slaney, M.P., the Marquis of Normanby and Dr. Southwood Smith among its more prominent members. In its ranks was Dr. J. R. Lynch, a Poor Law Medical Officer of the City of London. He secured election as a Common Councillor in order to batter the easy optimism of the City with regard to the perfection of its sanitary arrangements, and supplied a ghastly illustration of the truth of his complaint by catching typhus fever in the London slums, dying and leaving a widow and children unprovided for.

The Health of Towns Commission

It was difficult at that time to obtain a hearing in Parliament for the Public Health agitation. It was still regarded as a question of the health of towns, and while the country members were indifferent, the urban members were much more keenly concerned in the question of Free Trade, then fiercely contested. In default of the possibility of legislation, the sanitarians were content to secure, in 1844, a Royal Commission on the Health of Towns, which produced a report confirming in all respects the terrible picture which had been drawn by Chadwick's earlier report. Thus with regard to cleansing it was found that, out of all the towns inquired into, only in Bath and South Shields could it be asserted that refuse was removed at the public expense from the courts and alleys inhabited by the poor population.

One or two examples of the summary may be given. From Bradford the report is that there are no regulations for draining the town; that accumulations of refuse are thrown from the houses; that there are no sewers; that

the house drains emit offensive smells; that scavengers are employed to some extent for cleaning the streets, but the courts and alleys are very offensive; that the water supply is inadequate, the working classes obtaining their water from carts at the price of three gallons for one penny, but that waterworks are in progress. In Liverpool the surface drainage was defective, particularly that of the north end of the town, the town being full of pits of stagnant water; the sewers in the main streets, courts and alleys were neglected, so that refuse rotted on the surface; liquid matter was absorbed and found its way into the cellars; house drains, when they did exist, were not properly cleansed, and the regulations forbade the communication of house drains with sewers; paupers were employed as scavengers; the lower and north parts of the town were in a filthy condition; in courts and alleys the inhabitants did what cleansing was done, and did that very inefficiently; two companies supplied extremely pure water, but there were no public pumps or fountains, and the poor begged water or stole it. These two cases are typical of the whole number.

A general measure was brought in on the basis of the report of the commission, but nothing was passed in 1845 beyond a Clauses Act to facilitate the drafting of local Acts by particular districts.

The General Board of Health

But in 1847 the second great visitation of cholera came to Europe. Under this impulse the Public Health Act of 1848 was passed. It set up a General Board of Health, on lines somewhat similar to the Poor Law Commission, with the Commissioner of Woods and Forests for the time being as its chairman, and two other members. This board was to advise Parliament on questions relating to public health, and to guide and stimulate local Boards of Health, which by the Act could be instituted in urban localities which so desired, or might be created by

compulsion by the General Board where the death-rate was in excess of twenty-three per thousand. The two working Commissioners appointed were Edwin Chadwick, removed from the service of the Poor Law Commission, to the great delight of the Commissioners, and Lord Ashley, who became Earl of Shaftesbury while he was a member of the Board. To these Southwood Smith was shortly afterwards added as a medical adviser.

The Act was only temporary. Unless renewed the Board was to cease to exist at the expiry of five years. This was a fatal weakness, because it encouraged all vested interests threatened by the advance of sanitation (and it is remarkable how many there were) to obstruct and resist the Board, and it also deprived the officials through whom the Board had to act at once of any reasonable hope of advance and of security for the permanency of their appointments.

For six years (for in 1853 the existence of the Board was prolonged for one year) the members toiled unremittingly. Of Chadwick and Southwood Smith, Lord Shaftesbury declares that they knew neither fatigue or satiety of labour; he himself did his utmost not only to assist his colleagues in their official duties, but also to fight their battles with the Cabinet and with Parliament. By the end of 1853 one hundred and eighty-two local Boards had been set up, and one hundred and twenty-six surveys, with a view to putting the Act into operation, had been completed or undertaken. Throughout the period meetings of the Board had been held at an average of four or five times per week. Further, though under the Act the Board had no jurisdiction over London it framed bold and comprehensive schemes for dealing with the question of burials, water supply and main drainage. During its existence also the same impulse that had produced the passing of the Act of 1848 was effective in inducing various cities, beginning with London, to appoint Medical Officers of Health. The first report on the health of London,

drafted by Dr. (afterwards Sir) John Simon, is one of the most scathing arraignments of its own condition which any city has ever placed before the public.

It was not long before the storm began to gather round the heads of Chadwick and his associates. In Lord Shaftesbury's diary are found the following entries—

"May 14th, 1852. The *Times* has taken up the note of the undertakers, the water companies, the parliamentary agents, and the whole tribe of jobbers who live on the miseries of mankind and are hunting the Board of Health through brake and briar and hope to be 'in at the death!' Be it so; if we fall, not a body will be left to shout 'Unclean, unclean!' and form, guide and impel public opinion. Matters will become worse and worse. I tremble for the issue. Walked yesterday to review my old haunts in Westminster, and look at the wretched children in Pye Street; Sick, sick, sick, to see how little years of labour had done." . . .

"November 17th. Grieved to learn that not only nothing is done by the Government, but that the Ministers will take good care that nothing shall be done by any one else: the Board of Health is to be destroyed, its sin is its unpardonable activity." . . .

"August 9th, 1853. It is not wonderful, though sad, when we remember the interests that it has been our duty to approach and handle. We roused all the Dissenters by our Burial Bill, which, after all, failed.

"The Parliamentary Agents are our sworn enemies, because we have reduced expenses, and, consequently, their fees, within reasonable limits.

"The Civil Engineers also, because we selected able men, who have carried into effect new principles and at a less salary.

"The College of Physicians, and all its dependencies, because of our independent action and singular success in dealing with the cholera, when we maintained and

proved that many a Poor Law medical officer knew more than all the flash and fashionable doctors of London.

"All the Boards of Guardians; for we exposed their selfishness, their cruelty, their reluctance to meet and to relieve the suffering poor, in the days of the epidemic.

"The Treasury besides; for the subalterns there hate Chadwick; it was an ancient grudge and paid when occasion served.

"There are the Water Companies, whom we laid bare and devised a method of supply which altogether superseded them.

"The Commissioners of Sewers, for our plans and principles were the reverse of theirs; they hated us with a perfect hatred."

The second visitation of the cholera, the threat of whose coming had created the Board of Health, arrived towards the close of 1848, and in the years 1848 and 1849 killed 55,201 people in England and Wales. Little was known about the disease, but Chadwick was satisfied that the right way of combating it was to create a general condition of cleanliness, to carry out efficient means of sewage disposal, and to drive forward the provision of a pure water supply. This was the policy which he pressed, regardless of the varying opinions of medical men and the prejudices of local authorities. It is due to his efforts more than to any other single cause that England became relatively well equipped in these two respects, and diminished death-rates have clearly proved that he rightly chose the two most urgent and fundamental points of attack.

The third visitation of the cholera, in 1853 and 1854, which brought 24,516 deaths, prolonged the existence of the original Board of Health for a single year, and it was on August 5, 1854, that the Commissioners and their staff held their farewell dinner. Chadwick was then dismissed

from the public service, and retired on a handsome pension. The best use which the country could make of this man of genius, with his indomitable energy, his keen insight, his passionate hatred of disorder and inefficiency, was to pay him to leave dirt and disorder alone. He lived forty-six years longer. In his ninetieth year he was knighted as a K.C.B., and shortly afterwards died on July 5, 1890. His career is this summed up by the late Mr. Kirkman Gray—

> "Edwin Chadwick's large personality confronts us at every turn when we investigate the socio-political history of the nineteenth century. It was given to him to discern distant social ends to which he might advance by ruthless toil and the exercise of a stubborn will. He was, in fact, a prince of agitators . . . while other agitators worked their will on individuals, he goaded corporations. His ideal of centralisation set him in opposition to the dearest faith of Englishmen, the belief in *laisser-faire*. He desired to strengthen the central control, less for the sake of drainage or of health, than for the sake of strong administration. This was the height of his offending, and this drove him from office. But before he went he had shaken the old edifice of leave-it-alone to its foundations."—*Philanthropy and the State,* pp. 309, 310.

A weaker Board of Health was put into office in 1854. This, too, was got rid of, and the powers which it exercised either lapsed or were nominally vested in the Privy Council or in the Home Office. As Lord Shaftesbury had feared, the movement for Public Health was left without central guidance, control or stimulus. Parliament, however, did something to facilitate the action of local Sanitary Authorities, where they were desirous of acting, by the Public Health Act of 1858; and by degrees the desire for physical well-being, and the acceptance of the obvious truth that the war against disease can only be carried out effectively through the joint action of private and public effort, made

continually greater inroads upon the stronghold of sloth and vested interests.

The L.G.B.

At last a further Royal Commission on the general subject was called into existence in 1869. It reported that it was necessary that a strong central authority should be re-established to supervise the administration of all the laws relating to public health; it deprecated the creation of local sanitary authorities to deal with public health alone; and recommended that the duty of local public health administration should be entrusted to the municipalities. The latter recommendation was carried out by the Public Health Act of 1875, which not only established a system of local health administration, but also a great and valuable code specifying the duties which the local authorities were to carry out. But no strong central sanitary authority for public health was created. Instead the miserable alternative was adopted of handing over the work for which a Ministry of Public Health was required to the Poor Law Board, without even reorganising it, or giving it a suitable expert staff. It merely altered its name to "The Local Government Board."

It would have been better if no pretence of setting up a central health authority had been made, because in that case the omission would have been easy to remedy. The Local Government Board as a public health authority is a scandalous and disastrous failure, blocking the way to the creation of a rational system. Though some slight improvement has been made quite recently, it has never been equipped with the staff which it requires for its public health duties, it has never endeavoured to obtain such a staff. It shows no eagerness to exercise the coercive powers with which it is entrusted; thus attention has recently been drawn to the existence of an important town in the Thames Valley which still preserves the methods of sewage disposal and of water supply characteristic of the Middle Ages,

without interference or rebuke from the Local Government Board. On the other hand it makes no effort to obtain the really effective means of stimulating local authorities, which is exercised by the Board of Education, and by the Home Office in respect of police, the power of giving grants-in-aid for efficient administration. Further, its deficiencies are inherent in its very nature. A single department of State, under a single Minister, cannot effectively carry out the extraordinarily varied duties entrusted to this undifferentiated department. The most pressing reform needed in Local Government is the abolition of the very idea of an omnibus Local Government Board, and the transfer of its duties to a sufficient number of specialised departments, including, in the first place, a Ministry of Health.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CRIMEA AND THE MUTINY

The Plunge into War

In February 1854 the long peace after Waterloo ended with the despatch of an ultimatum from Britain and France to St. Petersburg, and the Crimean War began.

It is difficult to understand, and impossible to explain in a few words, the causes of the Crimean War. To a large extent they were personal, rising out of the special position and idiosyncrasies of the Emperor Napoleon III of France, the Czar of Russia and Lord Stratford de Redclyffe, the British Ambassador at Constantinople. The original cause of friction between France and Russia lay in a dispute over the guardianship of the rights of Christian pilgrims at Jerusalem; but a more important ground of difference rose from the pressure exercised by the Czar upon Turkey on behalf of the Christian provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia, which were desirous of forming themselves into the single principality of Roumania. Behind any arguments that could be raised for war there was a curious condition of the public mind, excited by the memories of the victories of Nelson and Wellington, forgetful of the sufferings of the war period, entirely ignorant of the evil reaction of war upon the national life, but comparatively awake to the injuries arising from internal political conflict. The doctrine was even preached that war has an ennobling and purifying influence, and the poet Tennyson appeared to imagine it was a cure for com-

mercial dishonesty. The country plunged into war with blind enthusiasm.

We are not here concerned with the story of the war itself. In briefest summary we may say that the English, French and Turkish Allies, afterwards joined by the Sardinians, succeeding after a long siege in taking Sebastopol, and concluded a treaty with Russia in March 1856 whereby Wallachia and Moldavia were nominally handed over to the Turks, but actually were allowed to form a single semi-independent principality.

Governmental Inefficiency

There are, however, certain significant features about the Crimean War which demand our attention.

In the first place, the war was a test of the efficiency of the national public service. The system of recruiting officers for the army was by nomination by Members of Parliament, *i.e.*, by political patronage. There is a boast in the biography of Sir Robert Peel that in making public appointments he never took any circumstance into consideration except the profit of the party; he scorned to make personal profit out of appointments. His biographer did not conceive it possible that the public advantage should be the guiding principle. In quiet times this system of government produced a strong reluctance to allow any work to fall into the hands of the Government which could be done in some other way. In time of war there was no possibility of avoiding governmental responsibility. The business of feeding, arming the troops, leading them in battle and guarding them against disease had to be done by the Government and the Government alone. The nation watched to see how this task would be performed. What it saw was sufficiently disquieting.

When it was resolved to make the Crimea the chief scene of operations, the little fishing village named Balaclava was made the base. A distance of seven miles separated it from the entrenchments of the army before

Sebastopol. The soil was of heavy clay. There were no roads, and no effort was made to make roads. Thousands of horses and mules were collected at Varna, the other side of the Black Sea, and left there. As soon as the autumn rains came, all the troops were separated from their base by seven miles of almost impassable mire. Baggage mules were gradually brought from Varna, but no forage was brought for them. The Treasury officials had forgotten the matter of hay, and no one on the spot dared take the responsibility of ordering it, so the beasts died, and the soldiers had to turn themselves into commissariat mules.

The men slept under leaky tents in puddles on the bare ground. They were expected to forage for their own fuel, none being provided, and such confidence had the administration in the soldiers' powers of foraging that their meat was served to them raw. Coffee, also, was issued unroasted and unground, for, as the Commissary-General said, "The soldiers will no doubt find some means of overcoming any difficulty that may arise from the want of mills and coffee-roasters." Green vegetables was another requirement overlooked, and scurvy broke out. An enterprising merchant captain had foreseen this difficulty, and brought to Balaclava a ship laden with cabbages, but no officer dared take the responsibility even of giving a receipt for the cabbages, so they were kept on board until they rotted, and then were thrown into the sea. Fresh meat could have been obtained in abundance, but the officers stuck to the traditional rations of salt beef and pork. There was plenty of lime-juice in store, but for months it was not served out. The sick were gathered in hospital tents, where they lay on the bare ground, and were fed on salt beef and biscuit till they could be shipped off to Scutari. The original British force that landed on September 14, 1854, was 25,000 troops; out of these 7,400 died in the three months of December, January and February, and in the last month out of the original force and reinforcements there were 23,000 on the sick list.

The news from the field of operations created great indignation. Popular clamour was appeased by the resignation of the Cabinet and the formation of a new Government; but a deep impression was made on the minds of politicians, and the experiences of the Crimea prepared the way for the abolition of purchase in the army, and for a reform of the Civil Service, whereby competitive examination became the main means of selection. This was carried out after the Reform Act of 1867 diffused political power more widely. Meanwhile Florence Nightingale tackled the actual problem of the care of the sick, and by the time the war ended succeeded in establishing an admirable organisation. She thereby created the present system of military nursing, and, moreover, permanently lifted to a higher plane the profession of nursing in times of peace as well as in war. The trained and educated hospital nurse is the best fruit of the Crimean War.

The Period of Wars for Nationality

The next aspect which demands consideration is the fact that the Crimean War ushered in a period of successive European wars which turned upon the principle of nationality. To the student of European history the most interesting feature in the Crimean War is the appearance before Sebastopol of a contingent of Italian troops sent by the King of Sardinia, whose domains included Piedmont, and whose capital was Turin. This was the first move played by Count Cavour in his campaign for the creation of a united Italy under the leadership of an Italian monarch. His object was to secure that the question of Italy should come up for discussion when negotiations for peace were being conducted. The greater part of the north of Italy, including Lombardy and Venice, was then under the domination of Austria; Tuscany, Parma and Modena formed three weak duchies in the centre of the peninsula, to the south of them lay the Papal Estates,

and, beyond, the kingdom of the Two Sicilies was ruled by a Bourbon monarch. Nothing was actually accomplished for Italy by the Treaty of Paris of 1856, but Cavour succeeded in entering into engagements with Napoleon III which led to the Franco-Austrian War of 1859, in consequence of which Lombardy was ceded to Sardinia; and Tuscany, Parma and Modena united themselves to the enlarged Italian kingdom; while Savoy and Nice were ceded to France as the price of Napoleon's help. In 1860 Garibaldi made his successful descent on the Two Sicilies, and in March 1861 Victor Emmanuel was declared King of Italy.

The war of 1865, by which Schleswig and Holstein were taken from the King of Denmark and added to the kingdom of Prussia, was the first of the series of wars by which the German Empire was created. In the war of 1866 Prussia and Italy combined against Austria, with the result that Venetia was added to the Italian kingdom, and the political connection between the historic empire seated at Vienna and the states now forming Germany were severed. During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 the Italian troops entered Rome, and, on its conclusion, the Empire of Germany and the Kingdom of Italy were established in their present form.

The Indian Mutiny

It was in May 1857 that the Mutiny broke out in Meerut. It spread with extraordinary rapidity from one military centre to another, and all but swept away the rule of Britain over the great peninsula. It is not improbable that, had it not been for the fact that British troops were being sent to China for the prosecution of a disgraceful opium war and were stopped on the way, the British forces would have been overwhelmed, and the result of a hundred years of gradual conquest would have been undone.

The causes of the Indian Mutiny were various and curious. To a great extent they were all based upon the

lack of effort on the part of the rulers of India to understand the mind and particularly the religious prejudices of the people.

The Mutiny was, to a certain extent, a movement for independence headed by native princes who had a definite grievance against the East India Company, because in a series of cases it had ignored their customary right, when childless, to continue their line by the principle of adoption.

There were elements of military weakness. The British troops numbered only 45,000, against native troops, trained under British officers, to the number of 257,000. The strength of the Company lay in its prestige due to the circumstance that it had never, up to 1842, been beaten in any campaign which it had undertaken. But this prestige received a considerable blow in the Afghan War. In 1855 the rumour was spread over India that the British army had been destroyed in the Crimea, and that once the troops in India had been disposed of no more would be available to take their place.

All this, however, does not explain why the troops were disposed to rise against their officers. To understand this it must be remembered that the great wave of Evangelicalism, originally started by the Wesleys in the middle of the eighteenth century, had, by the time the nineteenth century had well advanced, permeated the Church of England, and that it was then influencing very forcibly the officials of the Indian Government and the officers of the Indian army. This movement found expression in some actions which were highly commendable, although courageous to the point of rashness: the prohibition of suttee, the execution of criminal Brahmins despite the holiness of their caste, the authorisation of the remarriage of widows. But it further showed itself in a too aggressive effort on the part of officers to spread Christianity among the Mohammedan and Brahman rank and file of their regiments. The officer with the "Order-book in one hand and the Bible in the other" became a common feature in the native

regiments. He was a subject of religious horror, and he created a suspicion that it was the intention on the part of the Company to convert men forcibly to Christianity, or at least to break or degrade their caste. This suspicion was excited to keen apprehension by the enlistment order of September 1856, which specified that recruits henceforward might be required to serve beyond the sea. It was roused to frenzy when the new Enfield rifles were served out which had to be greased with a fat supplied to the troops, declared by persistent rumour to consist of a mixture of pig fat and beef fat, the pig being an abomination to the Mohammedans and the ox an object of veneration to the Hindoos. The Government asserted that the fat was innocent, the native troops refused to believe the assertion; and, in fact, it is impossible to assert with confidence that they were wrong. The Government withdrew the fat and substituted vaseline, with analyst's testimony to its constitution. But by this time no official statements on the subject received the slightest credence from the troops. Then a further rumour was spread that the Government contractors were in the practice of grinding up human bones to mix with the flour supplied to the troops. To the materialistic Westerner these provocations appear trifling; not so to the Oriental.

Of all the military events of the Indian Mutiny, of the Siege of Delhi, the Massacre of Cawnpore, the Relief of Lucknow, of the career of Gunga Bhai, the Indian Joan of Arc, whose death, shot down at the head of the cavalry, brought about the final conclusion of the war in April 1859, it is unnecessary to treat here. But it is worth while for us to dwell for a minute on the different ways in which the final suppression of the mutiny is viewed in England and in India. In England we are accustomed to think that the mutineers behaved with extraordinary ferocity, and that on the suppression of the mutiny they were treated with extraordinary clemency and generosity. In fact, the name of the Governor-General, under whom the settlement

was carried out, is handed down to us as "Clemency Canning." But to the native mind it probably appears that a horrible vengeance was taken for a comparatively trifling offence. To the Indian, whether orthodox Mussulman or orthodox Brahman, death is a trifling matter compared with what happens after death, and in the determination of the fate of the human being after death religious burial is an all-important element. The mutineers, when taken prisoners, were tied to the muzzles of guns and shot into fragments, so that it should be impossible to bury them. An Indian Sepoy, who fought on the British side right through the mutiny, records in his autobiography how among a batch of prisoners he recognised his own son, and how, as a reward for his long and faithful service and by earnest supplication, he obtained the privilege that his son should be shot, and that he should be allowed to bury him. This one man was, he believed, the only mutineer to whom burial was permitted.

On the conclusion of the mutiny the East India Company was abolished, and India was brought under the direct rule of the Crown. Certain lessons have been learnt; the proportion of British to native troops has been greatly increased; the zeal of Christian propagandists has been held in check; but it is doubtful whether there is, on the whole, much more real sympathy and understanding between the ruling caste in India and the native population than there was under the rule of the Company.

CHAPTER XV

PUBLIC ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Class Monopoly in Education

If the relations between the State and voluntary efforts for promoting popular education were peculiarly difficult and complicated throughout the nineteenth century, the reason must be sought in the history of preceding centuries. The critical time in the history of national education was the Protestant Reformation. In Scotland this was carried through by reformers who were naturally zealous for improved education, feeling it was their ally in the struggle with the "Popish superstition." Under John Knox's inspiration the principle was accepted, first by the Church and afterwards by the State, that there should be an elementary school for every parish, a grammar school for every market town, and a university for every city. In this way free access of even the poorest students of ability to the highest means of education possessed by the country was, to a very great extent, assured for all future generations. But in England Henry VIII was the master-spirit of the Reformation, and the master-motive was secular greed for Church endowments. These were closely intermixed with endowments for education, and the damage which was done through the wholesale plunder of the Church was not adequately compensated for by the creation of new grammar schools and colleges. Very frequently where land had been left for religious and educational objects combined, a small money endowment was created to continue the educational work, but the land itself went

to some private person. With the alteration in money values such educational endowments dwindled in real value, and the diminished provision for increasing needs was more and more monopolised by the class most able to help themselves. Hence in England a class monopoly of education was created in the seventeenth century, and became intensified in the eighteenth century, while the mass of the people were sunk in continually deeper ignorance.

Philanthropic Effort

Efforts began to be made at the end of the seventeenth century, under the encouragement of Queen Mary, to meet the crying need by the provision of charity schools, and the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge organised the movement. The motive of subscribers was mainly religious; it was felt that there was but little chance for salvation for children unable to read the Bible or to understand the Catechism, and so, because girls as well as boys were recognised as having souls, the charity schools were usually formed in pairs. The boys learned ordinarily reading, writing and a little arithmetic, girls reading, writing and sewing; meals and clothing were also commonly provided. The supply of these schools was only sufficient to provide for a very small proportion of the children of the country. A larger need was met by the Sunday Schools initiated by Robert Raikes in 1782. But at the end of the eighteenth century the happy thought was invented by Dr. Bell, and utilised by Joseph Lancaster, of applying something like the factory system to education. The unsectarian British and Foreign School Society (originally the Royal Lancastrian Society) and the "National Society for the Education of the Children of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church" sprang up to exploit the monitorial method.

The speech of the Secretary of the National Society at its annual meeting in 1816 illustrates the nature of the

monitorial system and its charm to the charitable donor. He explained that in order to establish a good school of nine hundred or one thousand children it was sufficient to obtain some disused workshop or other building capable of accommodating the children, and the services of a man of good natural common-sense, who must also receive a month's training in the art and science of education. When the master was trained, the school would be opened. Out of the children who attended some thirty of those who appeared most intelligent would be selected and would be admitted half-an-hour before the other children. In that half-hour the master would teach them the lesson for the day, and then each of these thirty little monitors would be given a class of thirty other children, and would recite what he had just learnt to his class, while the master surveyed the scene and maintained order. The efficiency of this method was extolled by the spokesmen of both societies; and it is easy to see that it offered education to a remarkably large number of children for a very moderate sum of money. It promised the generous donor a great deal for his guinea.

The First Education Grants

In the very beginning of the nineteenth century efforts were made, notably by Whitbread in 1807 and by Brougham in 1820, to provide a national system of education. Whitbread's Bill passed the House of Commons but was rejected by the House of Lords; Brougham's was defeated in the House of Commons. No step was taken by the Government until in 1833 the sum of £20,000 was placed in the Estimates to be used solely for the erection of schools, with the proviso that no grant was to be made unless at least one-half of the cost of building was met by voluntary contributions actually received, and a report recommending the application was received from the National Society or the British and Foreign School Society. No increase in grants was made till 1839, when

the annual vote was raised to £30,000, and a special Committee of the Privy Council for education was established, under whom inspectors of schools were appointed. It was intended in connection with this development to establish a normal training college for teachers, but this development was blocked by the jealousies of religious bodies which had already created their own training colleges.

In 1845 the report of the Education Committee gave a severe blow to the monitorial system. It was found that out of the children attending school only one in six was able to read the Bible with any ease, and even these were commonly unable to read any other book. It was estimated that about one-half of the children were still unable to read when they completed their school period. Only about one child in four acquired the art of writing, and only two per cent. advanced beyond the most elementary arithmetic. A new start was made in 1846 by improving the system of inspection, substituting a system of pupil teachers for the monitorial system, and by increasing the grants. The annual grant reached £160,000 in 1852, and it continued to advance rapidly until 1860, when it reached the sum of £842,119.

In 1853 a fresh attempt was made to deal with the problem of education along other lines than that of subsidising the philanthropical societies. Lord John Russell introduced a Bill to permit Town Councils of incorporated towns, or towns with a population exceeding five thousand, to levy rates in aid of education. The Bill failed, but it incidentally created capitation grants. In this way the principle of State assistance, first applied to the building of schools, and then to the training of teachers, was extended to the maintenance of the school itself.

Payment by Results

In 1858 a further effort by Sir John Pakington to deal with education by legislation failed in consequence of the religious difficulty, but led to the appointment of a Com-

mission which left a deep mark on the British elementary educational system. The Commissioners found that there were in the schools of the country about two and a half million children. Of these about two-thirds were in public schools of various sorts, one-third attending schools carried on by private adventure. Of those in the public schools rather more than half were in schools receiving grants and subject to inspection. Of the private adventure schools some were certainly very unsatisfactory, the teachers being untrained, frequently uneducated, and often recruited from those who had failed in other callings. Discharged servants, out-door paupers, cripples, consumptives, and aged and decrepit men and women were found among the numbers of those who taught poor children for the wretched fees which their parents were willing and able to pay.

The Commissioners held that the inspected schools were far superior, as a rule, to the others, but that even in these a great stiffening up of the standard was required. They recommended the individual examination of the scholars in order to prevent the neglect of backward pupils. They demanded "a searching examination of every child in every school to which grants are to be paid," so as to make "the prospects and position of the teacher depend to a considerable degree on the results of this examination." The Commission reported against compulsory attendance at school, and against the extension of State grants. It further recommended that grants should be paid to school managers. It recommended, again, that county rates should be levied and administered by county Boards of Inspection. The best of these proposals, that for a county rate, failed to secure adoption, but Mr. Robert Lowe, as Vice-President of the Committee for Education, drafted a new code to put into force the proposal of individual examination. This came into operation in 1861. In introducing the new system of payment by results he declared "that if the new system is expensive it shall at least be efficient; if it is

inefficient it shall be cheap." By his own test the code was disastrously inefficient. For year after year the grant fell. In 1861 it was £842,000, in 1862 £774,000, in 1863 £721,000, in 1864 £655,000, in 1865 £635,000. And yet the new code did not go the full length the Commission recommended. Instead of making a grant entirely upon examination, and requiring the examination of every child of every school, it allowed a grant of 4*s*. for attendance, besides 2*s*. 8*d*. for each pass in either reading, writing, or arithmetic made by a child who had attended two hundred times, and it further excused children under seven from individual examination.

Even with this modification, however, payment by results exercised a powerful and blighting influence upon the schools. The teachers were harried and worried, they in turn harried and worried the children. To secure passes children were compelled to go to school even when in the peeling condition of scarlet fever, and a great deal of injurious pressure was exercised upon ill-fed, nervous and backward children. But what was perhaps worst of all was that the managers insisted on real education being sacrificed to the dull, ceaseless grind at the "three R's," with the result that school work lost its interest. Probably less progress was made in the three sacred subjects than would have been the case under a more generous curriculum, and the real object of education, the development of the faculties of the children, was altogether sacrificed. The later progress of education, to a great extent, consisted in the sweeping away of this reactionary measure, which was, indeed, one of the most striking examples of the obsession of commercialism over the public mind at the time.

The Act of 1870

In 1867 the second Reform Act was passed, and all men householders in boroughs were enfranchised, so that a very large proportion of urban working men were entrusted with the powers and responsibilities of citizenship. The

perils of democracy combined with illiteracy were tolerably well realised. In 1869 two societies were formed: "The Education League," demanding the provision of free and unsectarian schools by local authorities through local rates, together with the principle of compulsory attendance; "The Education Union," advocating the development of a voluntary system with definite religious education, so that it might become universal. Out of this situation grew Mr. Forster's Education Act of 1870. It neither made education free nor compulsory, but it did require that there should be a public elementary school, under State inspection, available in every district. For this purpose the country was divided into school districts: (1) what is now the County of London, (2) the corporate boroughs, and (3), outside these, separate parishes. If in any school district sufficient voluntary schools did not exist and were not formed, a School Board had to be formed, required to build and maintain schools at the cost of the rates.

A compromise was effected on the religious difficulty by requiring: (1) that in all schools religious instruction must be given either at the beginning or at the end of the school period, and that parents should be allowed to withdraw their children if they chose; and (2) that the religious education given in Board Schools must be of an unsectarian character.

Between 1869 and 1876 the school accommodation nearly doubled, mainly through the efforts of voluntary agencies. Attendance was still unsatisfactory, and the Act of 1876 required every parent to cause his child to receive efficient elementary instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic, and prohibited the employment of children under the age of ten, or between the ages of ten and fourteen, without a certificate of educational proficiency. Under this Act School Attendance Committees were created for all school districts to enforce attendance. In 1890 the system of payment by results, which had been whittled away by degrees during the preceding twenty years, was finally abolished,

the grants being made dependent on average attendance except for certain grants for special subjects. This reform was immediately followed by the freeing of elementary education, a measure which may be regarded as the logical consequence of the third Reform Act which enfranchised agricultural labourers.

Acts passed in 1889 and 1891 authorised the newly created County Councils to provide for technical education, and the subsequent clashing of the technical education authorities with the School Boards led to the passing of the Education Acts of 1902 and 1903, whereby all local administration of education in England and Wales is put in the hands of authorities of a municipal character—County Councils, Borough Councils, and Urban District Councils. These have also acquired, under the acts named, extended powers of providing for all sorts of education.

While a national system has thus been created, the movement for abolishing monopoly in education has triumphed in other directions. In 1871 Dissenters were admitted to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and about the same time began the allied movements for University Extension and the creation of local universities. The Girls' Public Day School Company was the pioneer of a new movement for offering girls of the middle classes as efficient education as the "Public Schools" offer to boys, and women's colleges have been founded in large numbers. Ruskin College and the Workers' Educational Association have experimentally vindicated the claim of the manual workers to be offered full opportunities of education in the subjects relating to civic life and duties.

The present state of education in England and Wales may be described as very unsatisfactory, but full of promise of improvement. The elementary schools still bear the traces of their peculiar origin. The classes are too large, instruction rather than real intellectual training is their aim. The efficiency of the secondary schools and technical institutes which draw their pupils from the public elementary

schools is checked by the defects of the latter. On the other hand, the education of the "Public Schools," though possessing admirable features, is cursed by the tradition of class monopoly, and by the low ideal of education for individual culture instead of for public service. The third educational system the country possesses, that of the Girls' High Schools and Women's Colleges, in many respects the best of the three, needs revision in order to cure it of its present tendency to produce overstrain in girls at a critical stage in their growth; and to bring the passing of examinations into due subordination to the full and harmonious development of complete womanhood.

CHAPTER XVI

ENGLISH INDUSTRY FROM 1846 TO 1879

Railways Abroad

It is very interesting to read in *Hansard* the prognostications of Free Traders on the one side and Protectionists on the other with regard to the effect of free imports of food upon the future of British agriculture.

The Protectionists were vague. They uttered dismal forebodings of ruin, and of wholesale massing of the agricultural population in the manufacturing towns. The Free Traders, on the other hand, entered into a detailed examination of the agricultural possibilities of various foreign countries, and proved that there was but little possibility of any devastating flow of cheap foreign products into the British ports.

In the years immediately following 1846 the anticipations of the Free Traders were much the more nearly justified by results. In fact, the most prosperous decade for British agriculture in the nineteenth century was that from 1852 to 1862. The prices of cereals were on the whole higher than they had been for any corresponding period since 1833, and the values of meat and dairy produce were steadily advancing. It is true that the imports of foreign products were growing; but they were not increasing as rapidly as the demand of the growing urban populations.

On the whole the most important factor determining the evolution of industry was the general development of railway and steamship transit throughout the world. Railway building in Europe began about the year 1833. In that

year Belgium, which had newly won its independence from Holland, embarked on a well designed construction, by the State, of main lines. But progress in Europe was comparatively slow till about ten years afterwards. In 1842 railway building started on an extensive scale in France. The first line in Germany was laid down in 1836, but it was not until 1848 that the State of Prussia began to construct its lines, and it was not until 1870 that the development of the system was pushed forward energetically.

In the United States railway building went on at a steadily accelerated rate, until interrupted by the Civil War, which broke out in the spring of 1861. At this time the total length of railway constructed was about 30,000 miles. In the seven years which followed the conclusion of the war, 1866–1872, the railway mileage was doubled, and after the financial panic that then checked development, construction again was accelerated, 40,000 miles being constructed in the five years ending 1883.

What was particularly important for British industry was the development of the railway system west of the Missisippi, and the opening out of the great prairie area so eminently suitable for the growing of cereals. In 1865 there were but three thousand miles of railway west of the Missisippi. Between that year and 1883 46,600 miles were constructed. Upon British industries the immediate effect of this world-movement towards quickening and cheapening transit had the effect of producing an ever-expanding market for manufactures. The development of European competition was considerably checked by the wars of nationality which followed the conclusion of the Crimean War, in which Prussia, France and Italy and the southern German States were repeatedly engaged. American competition in manufacture remained insignificant compared with the great development of America in the export of food and raw material and in the consumption of manufactured articles. The British manufacturers' ideal that Britain should become the workshop of the world, and that

all other countries should send her raw material for her manufactures, food for her artisans and orders for her goods, was more and more realised up to the year 1873. How rapid during this period was the development of American production of foodstuffs may be shown by a few figures.

In 1866 the United States exported five million bushels of flour, in 1874 seventy-one million bushels; in the earlier year 650 million pounds of cotton, in the later 1,358 millions. In the same time the export of bacon and hams increased ninefold, that of lard sixfold, of tallow fivefold; while the exports of pork, beef, and tobacco doubled.

The Cotton Famine

Meanwhile it is interesting to note that the American Civil War left a permanent mark on the social history of the country. Complacency with the policy of the new Poor Law of 1834 gradually grew up to 1860. Pauperism had been steadily declining; the resistance to the repressive system had been weakening; and in consequence of commercial prosperity wages had been rising even more rapidly than the prices of necessities of life, and labour was becoming more independent. But when the blockade of the Southern ports by the Federal Government had brought with it a famine in raw cotton which threw Lancashire operatives out of employment by the thousand, the validity of the Poor Law principles of 1834 was put to a severe test. What was to be done with the weavers and spinners who were reduced to starvation by this interruption to the ordinary course of trade? According to the principles adopted by the nation, they should have been refused assistance until they became destitute, and then given workhouse fare and workhouse discipline, which was intentionally made repellent in order to compel the man who might become a pauper to make every possible effort to maintain his independence. The broad theory was that if a worker was not wanted in one industry he must be

driven to overcome all natural inertia and practical difficulties which stood in the way of his finding some other occupation by which he could secure an independent living. But in the case of the Lancashire cotton operatives it was very obvious that if a strict adherence to the principles of 1834 compelled them to take to other sorts of work, all their acquired skill upon which this most prosperous industry depended would become practically lost to the nation. Similarly if they underwent the degradation of workhouse life, or were reduced to actual destitution, their industrial efficiency would likewise suffer a very great diminution. No real re-examination of the principles of 1834 was made, but it was admitted that an exception must be made in the case of the cotton operatives, and that there must be special provision for their relief. The actual provision made was unsatisfactory enough; but to a considerable extent the mind of the public was opened to the fact that the supposed invariable principles of political economy might not always and in all circumstances hold good. The American War gave timely assistance to a movement already begun for the reform of poor-law administration.

The Campaign for the Humanisation of the Poor Law

There is a very interesting passage in the *History of the Poor Law*, by Sir George Nicholls, himself one of the chief architects of the system of 1834, in which he gives a table of average salaries as paid in 1850 to union and workhouse officials. We find that while clerks received on an average £110, medical officers received only £50, masters and matrons £37, schoolmasters £31, schoolmistresses £21, and nurses £14 per annum. It is very significant that, bearing in mind that every union had to have a workhouse, and that each workhouse had to include a general hospital, that 634 unions had between them only 248 paid nurses, and that the average salaries of the nurses called to this most laborious and responsible work was £14 per annum.

Still more significant is the comment of Sir George Nicholls on his own figures: "The amount of the salaries exhibited in the foregoing statement is certainly large."

But not long after a campaign for letting light into the secret places of the workhouses and humanising the conditions found therein began. Miss Louisa Twining, the daughter of a clergyman, while living in London in the 'fifties took up district visiting, and among the poor acquaintances she made was an old woman, who was compelled to remove into the workhouse through illness at the age of seventy. She begged Miss Twining to continue to visit her there. Miss Twining did so, and found her in a shed, put among the able-bodied women, picking oakum on a brick floor, in her own words, "amid the sweepings of six parishes." It was a fortnight before the old woman was removed into the infirm ward. Miss Twining took to visiting the workhouse regularly, and then to organising a body of lady visitors, but soon she found that permission to enter the workhouse was denied by the authority of the Poor Law Board itself. The greater the obstacles put in her way, the more determined she was to surmount them, and to ascertain what was the condition of the sick and aged and unfortunate in those workhouses which were regarded with so much official complacency as an effective means for reducing pauperism.

She found that there were 50,000 sick in the London workhouses, nursed almost entirely by pauper nurses, of whom half were above fifty years of age and some over eighty, and whose remuneration consisted of extra allowances of tea or beer. One nurse, frequently left in sole charge of the sick ward of a large London workhouse, a woman given to drink and of a violent and ungovernable temper, confessed to Miss Twining that she had been sixteen times in the house of correction. Imbeciles, again, were left in charge of old pauper women between seventy and eighty years of age.

Another deplorable feature of the actual working out of

the principle of less eligibility, was that the workhouse became less eligible than the prison. In the single year 1856, the Visiting Justices of Westminster alone committed 494 indoor paupers to prison from Westminster workhouses. It would frequently happen, Miss Twining explains, that a servant girl losing a situation and without a home in London, would become destitute before she could find another situation. Entering a workhouse she would be set to pick oakum amid a body of other women of various characters, but all more or less degraded by workhouse treatment, with no supervision except that of the taskmaster. His treatment of her might goad her to rebellion and abusive language, then she would be locked up in the "Black Hole," and afterwards committed to prison. Subsequently, having tried both prison and workhouse, she would look upon the former as a desirable refuge from the latter.

At the Social Science Congress in Glasgow in 1860 opinion was focussed upon the necessity of getting three classes of paupers out of the workhouse: the children, the sick in need of remedial treatment, and the incurables. So far as the children were concerned, efforts had already been made in this direction, and by an Act of 1844 power had been conferred upon the central authority to group unions in "school districts" for the purpose of maintaining great barrack schools, in which, it was thought, the expense of maintenance would be reduced to a minimum, and the children be brought up in a more satisfactory manner than in the workhouses. This system was developed to a considerable extent in London, though to no great extent in the provinces. It was better than the practice of bringing up children within the workhouse, but the life of the children in the barrack schools was one of deadening monotony, their training and education was by no means satisfactory, their vitality was low and they were extraordinarily subject to infectious diseases. Mrs. Nassau Senior in 1874 initiated a demand for further reform, which

has led to the development of some more satisfactory systems; as the boarding out of orphan and destitute children among working-class families in the country; the very expensive Cottage Home system, the Scattered Home system in which children are brought up in rather large artificial imitations of a family in small houses scattered over the union to which they belonged.

The agitation with which Miss Louisa Twining was more directly associated, that for the improvement of the condition of the sick, was taken up by the *Lancet* and other medical journals. A considerable victory was won in 1867 when the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund was created, by which the whole of London, instead of the separate unions, was made chargeable for the maintenance of lunatics in asylums, of fever and smallpox cases in specially provided hospitals, of children in special schools, and for medical service. The Metropolitan Asylums Board was created for the purpose of carrying out the provision of asylums and hospitals; and the dispensary system was set up for the administration of poor-law medical relief outside the workhouse.

An enormous change for the better took place in the treatment of the sick poor in London. The workhouse infirmary became by degrees practically a public general hospital, usually suitable in construction, well equipped, and served with continually increasing efficiency by a special staff of doctors and nurses. Similar progress has been made in some provincial unions; but these, on the whole, lag behind London.

The Crisis of 1879

When the American War was over British industry again continued to prosper and British trade to expand. The exports of cotton cloth, for example, increased from £39,524,000 in 1863 to £60,927,000 in 1866, and of cotton yarn from £8,063,000 in 1863 to £13,685,000 in 1866. If we take the value of British exports as our test of manu-

facturing activity, we find the advance is rapid and continuous until 1872, when the total value reached £256,257,000 (against £124,000,000 in 1862), a figure which was not surpassed until 1890; while the value of exports per head of British population, which was £4 5*s*. 7*d*. in 1862, rose to £8 1*s*. in 1872, but did not again reach so high a figure until 1906. If we judge by imports we find that 1873 was the culminating year, when the total value reached £371,287,000 as compared with £225,716,000 in 1862, and the value per head was £11 11*s*. 2*d*. as compared with £7 14*s*. 7*d*. in the earlier year. But the figures for 1877 showed a renewed tendency for imports to increase, and the difference betwen imports and exports has shown a continual tendency to widen.

To a great extent these figures, however, are delusive. We measure the value both of imports and exports in pounds sterling, and the pound sterling is a very variable measure of value. As prices rise the amount of actual commodities indicated by each million pounds' worth of exports decreases, and the power of such a recorded value of exports to procure goods from abroad similarly decreases; the opposite is the case when prices are falling. Prices were rising from 1858 up to 1873. But in 1873 monetary changes on the continent of Europe took place of the greatest importance. The newly formed Empire of Germany converted her coinage from a basis of silver to one of gold, with the natural effect that the exchange value of silver was lowered, and the general level of prices in silver-using countries was raised; while the exchange value of gold was increased, and prices began to fall in the British Isles. In the same year the Latin Union of France, Belgium, Switzerland and Italy, which had long retained a bi-metallic currency, and had steadied the relative values of gold and silver through the great fluctuations in the world output of the precious metals, found itself in peril of being completely drained of gold by the new demand from Germany, combined with the shrinking

in gold production that was then taking place. Accordingly the countries in the Union were compelled in 1873 to close their mints to silver, and this again aggravated the depreciation of silver and the appreciation of gold. How the general level of prices varied in consequence is shown by the diagram in the Appendix.

If we allow for the variations in the real meaning of the pound sterling, we find that, estimated in real values, British exports as well as imports have continued to expand since 1872, though with considerable fluctuations, and at a diminished rate compared with the preceding period.

But while manufacture suffered only a partial check to its growth, British agriculture in the 'seventies experienced a crisis which was followed by a long continued decline. Up to about 1874 the farmers were on the whole prosperous, foreign competition was mainly felt in corn and wool; but such meat as was imported was considered as of inferior quality, and the prices of British meat and dairy produce were well maintained. The acreage under wheat and corn crops up to 1874 showed very little tendency to decrease. But after a series of bad or poor harvests there came the black year of 1879. It was a summer of almost unintermittent rain. The hay was ruined; the yield of wheat worked out at an average of 15½ bushels per acre, or only half a crop; the yield of other cereals was nearly as bad, and the quality was as poor as the quantity was deficient. In previous years since 1846 bad harvests had been followed by some increase of prices, though not to such an extent as earlier in the century. But in 1879 America had a bumper crop, and prices fell instead of rising. The British markets, too, were overflooded with American cheese, which brought the value down to a record low price; while sheep-rot, pleuro-pneumonia, and foot-and-mouth disease ravaged the flocks and herds.

Ever since 1855 rents had been rising, not only because the profits of agriculture had been increasing, and addi-

tional capital had been put into land in the form of farm buildings and drainage, but also because the continual tendency of farms to increase in size produced an accentuated competition for the diminished number of holdings, and so forced the level of rents up to or beyond the maximum that farmers could pay. In the crisis of 1879 many tenant farmers were ruined. Landlords accustomed to anticipate continually increasing rent-rolls, with properties frequently encumbered, sometimes refused all reductions of rent and very frequently made only temporary deductions. Agricultural wages remained stationary for a few years, and then began to be generally reduced. Investment of fresh capital in land was checked, labour began to be economised to the maximum; and the exodus of agricultural workers to the towns was greatly accelerated.

CHAPTER XVII

THE INDUSTRIAL WORKER FROM 1846 TO 1879

The New Model in Trade Unionism

Though Chartism had its second outbreak in 1848, the period when it really began to weaken in its hold over the minds of the industrial classes of England began about 1843. A general tendency showed itself for men to turn with some degree of distaste from impassioned political oratory to the tackling of the actual detailed problems of their industrial interests. The most significant sign of the times was the brilliant success in co-operation achieved by the Rochdale Pioneers of 1844, and the widespread imitation of their efforts in the North of England. So successful was this movement that in 1863 the English Wholesale Society was started, which added a national organisation of the several co-operative societies to the local organisation of the distributive stores. The Scottish Wholesale was formed in 1868, and the Co-operative Union in 1869. These events were approximately contemporaneous with the political enfranchisement of the urban worker by the second Reform Act of 1867, and the provision of a national system for elementary education by the Act of 1870.

The changed temper of the artisan also showed itself in the conduct of the trade unions. Their rules and expenditure showed a new interest in education, a tendency to form libraries and classes, and to issue trade journals. Their industrial policy showed how much their leaders had assimilated the current economic teaching of the day, which had, of course, to a great extent, been popularised by the

controversies over the fiscal system. The idea that the wages of labour were determined by the forces of supply and demand operating in the labour market having been impressed upon the trade unions, they naturally applied the lesson by endeavouring to foster emigration and to limit apprentices. The middle-class ideas of organisation also showed their influence in the effort to restrict the liberty of branches and bring them under the control of central executives. Past experience, as well as the constant teaching of the economists, produced a reaction against strikes, some unions even abolishing the possibility of striking according to rule. As an alternative method to bring pressure to bear upon the employer, it was suggested that his workers should be withdrawn from him one by one, a method that might be very effective at a time when the employer had as many orders as he could execute, and skilled labour of the sort he needed happened to be scarce.

It was not, however, until after the second outbreak of the Chartist movement that the new type of trade unionism which was destined to make history in the succeeding five-and-twenty years came definitely into the foreground. The year 1851 saw the formation of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. The foundation of this society was the Journeymen Steam-engine and Machine-makers and Millwrights' Friendly Society, established in 1826, which by 1848 numbered seven thousand members in branches all over the kingdom, with an accumulated reserve fund of £27,000. By this time it had developed an elaborate internal organisation. Its characteristic features were an extended and varied system of benefits, paid for by high weekly contributions; a constitution whereby much detailed administrative work had to be done in the various branches by the branch officials, combined with strong control over all important matters of administration by a central executive committee, and an apparent localisation of the funds disguising their real centralisation. This society was becoming prominent among those existing in the growing

engineering industry, through its aggressive trade policy. In March 1850 its two chief leaders, William Newton and William Allan, succeeded in carrying through the scheme of amalgamation which created the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, whereby in practical effect three or four smaller societies were absorbed in their own. There were difficulties in the carrying out of the amalgamation, but by October 1851 Newton and Allan were at the head of a united society of eleven thousand members paying contributions of one shilling a week each. The union exceeded in membership, and still more in annual income, any other trade union of the time.

Towards the end of the year the Amalgamated Society entered upon a campaign for the abolition of overtime and for the exclusion of labourers from the working of machines. This led to a general lock-out throughout London and Lancashire of the whole of the engineering trade, beginning on January 10, 1852. The masters refused to employ any union man unless he signed the "document," forswearing trade-union membership. After three months' struggle the men were obliged to return to work on the employers' terms. But they did not regard themselves as morally bound by the signing of the document under compulsion, and the A.S.E. speedily recovered and surpassed it previous strength.

In the succeeding years the A.S.E. became the model for a number of new national trade societies, while other organisations incorporated its leading features. An important event in the development of this new trade-union movement was the strike in the London building trade of 1859 to 1860. A movement was initiated by the London carpenters for a nine-hours day, which the masons and bricklayers joined. A joint committee of the three trades sent a memorial on the subject to the master builders, and then a special petition to four firms selected by ballot. One of these firms, Messrs. Trollope, dismissed the man who presented the memorial. This led to an immediate

strike against Messrs. Trollope. The masters replied by a general lock-out, in which 24,000 men were excluded from their employment. A long struggle took place, which ultimately ended in the return to work on the old conditions.

The London Builders were badly organised, but they were well supported by various unions throughout the country. The A.S.E. made three weekly donations to the strike funds of £1000 each, and this demonstration of their financial strength made a deep impression. It was further noted that in the struggle the stonemasons, who had a national society and could levy provincial members for the benefit of their London strikers, could have continued the struggle for a long time; but the carpenters, who had but a London society, and that an ill-organised one, were soon reduced to extremities. When the strike was over a new Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners was formed, imitating the constitution of the Engineers and adopting a similar scale of benefits. Under the leadership of Mr. Robert Applegarth it speedily became a great and powerful union. Other societies and trades followed the example, and a widespread influence was exerted upon other unions which made no radical alterations in their rules.

"The Junta"

The trade-union movement from this time came under the guidance of what Mr. and Mrs. Webb term the Junta, an informal cabinet of five trade-union leaders living in London and in constant communication with one another. These were William Allan and Robert Applegarth, the secretaries of the two great societies of Engineers and Carpenters; Daniel Guile, general secretary of the Iron-founders; Edwin Coulson, general secretary of the London Order of Bricklayers; and George Odger, who alone of the group held no official position in the trade-union movement, but who was the favourite platform

spokesman of London trade unionism, and who was selected as the foremost champion of the movement for direct representation in Parliament of the manual workers.

These men had a definite and clear-sighted policy. Largely indoctrinated with the political economy of the day, they held no extravagant views as to the possibilities of social emancipation through direct trade-union action. Their trade-union policy was to build up strong societies, made solid by the accumulated interest of the member in its financial benefits, which tended to increase in amount and practical value for him as he grew older; to build up a great reserve fund; and to make it practically impossible for the employers to conduct their business satisfactorily without employing trade-union men and conceding the standard wage; the trade-union standard wage being fixed at the amount which the best employers were willing to concede. Apart from this, they desired to use other means for effecting those reforms which had appeared to them to be unobtainable by direct action of the trade unions. They strongly advocated direct labour representation and political agitation for reform of the law as between the employer and employed, for extension of the franchise, and of national education. As the level of wages for the skilled trades was advancing, and with it the level of rents, there was an increasing number of working men who became entitled to the franchise as £10 householders. This gave the trade-unions a political lever with which to work, and it was a very important element in securing the Reform Act of 1867, and the much fuller enfranchisement of the urban workers.

Two other features may be noted with regard to the new spirit dominating the trade-union movement. We note on the one hand a disposition to adopt a variety of schemes which appeared to offer some practical improvement in social and economic conditions. Thus, when the Christian Socialists, after 1848, held out the ideal of producers' co-

operation, that the working men in a trade union should combine together to secure capital for themselves, and to conduct the industry under the leadership of foremen elected by themselves, the trade-union world was ready to accept the idea with a considerable amount of enthusiasm. Though this form of co-operation has had but little practical success in England, it yet has had an extremely valuable effect in stimulating and inspiring with broader ideals the co-operative movement on the Rochdale plan, and the action of the Christian Socialists directly led to the establishment of the Co-operative Union. Another movement which appeared on the field in the year 1862, the Working Men's Club and Institute Union, has had a very great measure of actual success, having now working men's clubs in affiliation to the union. It carries on a steady educational propaganda among them, and has secured their co-operation in establishing convalescent homes for members.

The other notable feature in the developments about the year 1860 was the establishment of permanent trade councils. These had been formed before 1860 in Sheffield, Liverpool and Edinburgh, and in 1861 the London Trades Council was formed. Since then one of the signs of the rising vigour of trade unionism at different epochs has been the increased activity of such trades councils in various towns.

The work of the Junta, in making trade unionism an effective political force, was much facilitated by the ascendancy of men of similar aims and ideas in the largest provincial centres of trade unionism. Among these the most notable were Alexander Macdonald, the leader of the coal-miners, and Alexander Campbell, who dominated the Glasgow Trades Council. Macdonald led the miners into a long struggle to secure the reform of the Mines Regulation Acts, and in particular to obtain the statutory right of the miners in each pit to appoint a check-weigher to certify the accuracy of the weighing of the coal on which

the miners' earnings were, and have continued ever since, to be regulated. The first Act that ceded the principle was that of 1860, the Mines Regulation Act of 1872 slightly strengthened the position of the check-weigher, and the Act of 1887 finally made clear the right of the men by the provision that the majority of those employed in any pit were entitled to appoint, at the expense of the pit, a check-weigher with full power to keep an accurate and independent record of each man's work.

A much shorter struggle, carried on on a wider scale, secured the amending of the general law between employer and employed. The old Master and Servant Acts were based on the idea that violation of contract by the employer was only a civil case, but by workmen a criminal offence. On the one hand the employer was only liable to be sued for damages or for payment for the amount due. On the other hand the workman who left his work could be sentenced to three months' imprisonment. It followed, also, that a master when sued by his workmen could be a witness in his own favour, but the workmen when prosecuted by the employer could not. Further, in the absence of any Court of Criminal Appeal, a workman on an alleged case of breaking of contract could be seized, brought before a single Justice of the Peace, who could hear the case in his own house, and be sentenced to imprisonment without any right of appeal. The trade-union agitation for the reform of this law was first organised in 1863, and was successful in obtaining an amending Act in 1867.

Position of Trade Unions before the Law

Meanwhile, however, the issue of the position of workers' combinations before the law was about to be fought on broad lines. From 1850 to 1866 trade unionism had been steadily growing in power and influence. Its growth had been watched with alarm in many quarters; and the strong national societies, though they were moderate and

conservative in their trade policy, were specially feared and dreaded by employers. In October 1866 the latent hostility against trade-unionism was roused to fever-point by an outrage in Sheffield. Sheffield has long been remarkable for the multiplicity of its craft unions, and many of these were notorious for the brutality of their methods of enforcing decisions of the union on any particular member. Rattening—*i.e.*, interfering with the workmen's tools—was their ordinary method of enforcing discipline; when it failed methods of terrorising were adopted. The social conditions in the Sheffield trades about the year 1866 are depicted in Charles Reade's novel, *Put Yourself in his Place*. In October 1866 agents of the Saw Grinders' Union let down a can of gunpowder through the chimney into the house of a man who was working for a firm against whom the saw grinders had struck. A demand arose among employers for a general investigation into the position of trade unions before the law. This demand was re-echoed, for a very different reason, by the trade unions themselves.

The development of great amalgamated societies, with their large accumulated funds, had made more serious than ever the question of the legal protection of such funds. The Act of 1825 had done nothing to give trade unions regular legal status; but a section of the Friendly Societies Act of 1855 had allowed societies established for any purpose not illegal to deposit their rules with the Registrar of Friendly Societies, and have disputes among their own members dealt with summarily by the magistrates. Trade unions had largely taken advantage of this clause, in the belief that it allowed them to prosecute a member who wrongfully used the society's funds. The Boiler-makers' Society in 1866 proceeded against the treasurer of their Bradford branch for wrongfully withholding the sum of £24. The magistrates held that the society could not proceed under the Act of 1855, as it was a trade union and not a friendly society. On appeal, the Court of Queen's Bench, headed by the Lord Chief Justice, confirmed

the decision, declaring that trade unions were illegal associations. The ground of their judgment was obviously more serious than the judgment itself.

Immediately on the publication of the decision of the judges in January 1867, the London trade-union leaders took up the question, assisted by leaders of the Christian Socialists and Positivists. The first thing to be done was to secure the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole subject, which the employers were already demanding; the second, to secure that the trade-union case should be put effectively before that Commission. No workman, till a long time after, was ever appointed a member of a Royal Commission, but trade unionists were fortunate in having as their spokesmen Mr. Thomas Hughes (the author of *Tom Brown's School-days*) and Mr. Frederic Harrison. The question of the Sheffield outrages was put in the hands of special examiners, while the main body dealt with the general problem of trade-unionism, and in particular with the large and powerful unions. For these Allan, Applegarth and their associates were able to present an overwhelmingly powerful case.

The majority report contained no recommendation which was adverse to trade unions, and the minority report, signed by Messrs. Harrison and Hughes and the Earl of Lichfield, advocated the removal of all special legislation relating to labour contracts, and urged that no act by a combination of men should be regarded as criminal if it would not have been criminal in a single person.

Meanwhile, the Reform Act of 1867 was passed, and a general election took place. It was some time before Mr. Gladstone's Ministry dealt with the problem. Then, in 1871, the Home Secretary introduced a Bill which, on the one hand, gave trade unions complete protection for their funds without interfering with their internal liberty, but, on the other hand, codified all the penalties which the law already sanctioned for picketing, or otherwise interfering

with employers, or with the men who chose to work during a labour dispute. The trade unions vigorously protested against this clause, but the only concession they could secure was that it was made into a separate Act, the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1871. The Junta had largely obtained what it specially desired, viz. the legal protection of the union funds. But the rank and file of the trade-union world was exasperated to the utmost, and their irritation was intensified by the action which was taken under the Criminal Law Amendment Act in various disputes; as when certain gas stokers were sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment for conspiracy to coerce their employers by simultaneously leaving their work. It appeared evident that while trade unions were legalised, every sort of action which they could take to enforce their views in disputes with an employer was made subject to very severe penalties.

The agitation for repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act continued through the later part of Mr. Gladstone's Ministry, and at the election of 1874 a general campaign for direct representation in Parliament of trade-union leaders was made effective. Thirteen labour candidates went to the poll, and of these Alexander Macdonald and Thomas Burt, the leading officials of the National Miners' Union, became the first Labour Members of the House of Commons. The Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1871 was repealed, the Master and Servant Act of 1867 was replaced by the Employers and Workmen Act, by which both parties became similarly and equally responsible under the Civil Law alone. Peaceful picketing was permitted, and violence and intimidation were left to be dealt with as part of the general criminal code. This legislation, passed in 1876, was supposed for a period of twenty-three years to have satisfactorily settled the legal status of trade unionism.

Expansion and Contraction

The period from 1871 to 1876, which witnessed such a notable advance in the political influence of trade-unions, was also marked by their rapid growth in membership and in industrial influence. The Trades Union Congress of 1872 claimed to represent 375,000 men; that of 1874 represented a nominal total of 1,191,922 members. This growth is shown both in the great increase of membership in unions of old standing and in the spread of the movement towards branches of labour which had long been completely unorganised. In 1872 the movement even spread to the agricultural labourers, and the Agricultural Labourers' Union, started on March 29, boasted a membership of over 100,000 by the end of the year. Considerable increases of wages were obtained, but the labourers found against them, in almost perfect solidarity, the landowners, the clergy and the farmers. While on the one hand the Lady Bountifuls of the countryside undermined the union by exerting their influence over the labourers' wives, the farmers victimised the leaders, and the Bishop of Gloucester recommended that the organisers should be ducked in the horse-pond. It is not surprising, when one considers the poverty of the labourers, their dependence on charitable help in hard winters, and the isolation in which they live and work as compared with urban workers, that their organisation was gradually broken down during the following four or five years.

The same period also showed a vigorous effort to organise women workers, and some societies then founded have continued to exist, though their value has largely consisted in showing the impossibility of dealing with the great problem of sweating merely by organisation of the sweated workers.

But in 1874 the contraction of trade from its high-water mark led to a series of desperate and generally unsuccessful

strikes against reductions of wages, which crippled many unions.

And while wages were reduced and hours increased, unemployment was not prevented by these devices for making the employment of labour more profitable to the capitalist. The great unions which had provided for unemployed pay for their members were reduced to a state approaching bankruptcy. Many small local unions had disappeared altogether, and some national societies survived only as local associations. In South Wales and some other districts trade unionism practically ceased to exist, and it is probable that the total trade-union membership stood at about the same level in 1879 as in 1871.

Nevertheless, the movement weathered the storm with very much less loss of strength than in the earlier period of adversity between 1839 and 1842, and it was much more able than before to advance into new strength and aggressiveness when next the condition of industry became more favourable.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUNICIPAL LIFE

General Trend of Municipal Progress

We have in previous chapters explained the nature of the revolution in municipal government effected by the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, and have given a brief account of the campaign for public life which created the General Board of Health of 1848. The period that followed was marked by a progressive increase in the efficiency of the municipal government of the great cities in the public interest taken in their doings, and by a rising sense of the importance of the civic life, which has done something to create in modern England a spirit of enlightened local patriotism not altogether dissimilar to that which animated the ancient cities of the Mediterranean or the fortified boroughs of the Middle Ages.

It is impossible, of course, to give any general account of the municipal movement. Every city had its own geographical, industrial and social environment, and its own historical background. It had its own problems to face, it developed its own local leaders, and its own view as to what were the most urgent necessities and the best way of meeting them. But once the progressive movement was started in any particular town, one of the most potent influences working upon the town was the example of those that had preceded it. We may, moreover, note certain causes which acted as a general stimulus to all the great centres of population. One of these was the influence of commercial and manufacturing prosperity. This produced

the resources for new enterprises, and gave the municipal financier confidence that the yield of a penny rate would be continually increasing, so that a given burden of debt for an enterprise for common benefit would become automatically lighter as the years went by. The same cause also had its influence on the type of business man who became a municipal leader. The advantages of the widened market abroad for British exports were grasped by a certain proportion only of manufacturers, and the ablest men had opportunities of rising in wealth beyond their rivals and in obtaining corresponding prestige and influence in local municipal life. Other important influences operating on the municipalities were the gradual development of popular education and the increased recognition of Edwin Chadwick's principles of pure water and efficient drainage after he himself had been silenced.

Liverpool

Some brief account of the development of some of the great provincial cities will illustrate the general tendency of the whole municipal movement. Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow suffered perhaps more terribly than any other towns from the social degradation produced by the unregulated growth of industry and by the subordination of human to commercial interests. Liverpool and Glasgow were further depressed by the fact that it was possible for them to draw upon a rural population in Ireland and the Highlands accustomed to a very low standard of wage and comfort, and specially helpless in facing the problem of securing a healthful and decent existence in the purlieus of a great city.

The select Corporation which governed Liverpool before 1835 has been found by Mr. and Mrs. Webb to have been exceptionally able and public spirited. Liverpool Corporation was the first public authority in the country to establish baths and wash-houses, the first public baths being opened in 1794 and the first wash-houses in 1842.

This lead then secured has been maintained ever since, and the Liverpool baths, both indoor and open-air, are famous as being the most extensive and varied in the country. The old Corporation also organised the markets, and built St. John's Market in the year 1820. But till 1856 the city had no public park, and until 1857 the water supply was in the hands of a private company, which turned on the supply only two or three days per week. The report of the Royal Commission of 1844 stirred the new Corporation, which had been established in 1835, into immediate activity. A Sanitary Act was obtained in 1846 and the broad policy for the development of public health was elaborated, based on drainage into the river Mersey. When this was carried out it was found that an ample supply of water was necessary in order to secure the proper working of the system of drainage. After 1857 the water supply was municipalised, and twenty years later the bold step was taken of creating Lake Vyrnwy in North Wales, and bringing a water supply of forty million gallons a day. In more recent years Liverpool has been conspicuous among British cities for the development of a housing policy which aims at providing municipal dwellings at rents possible for the very poorest. It has also created seven municipal hospitals for infectious diseases, and it has carried on a great educational work.

Glasgow

In many respects the social environment of Glasgow is similar to that of Liverpool. It had its ancient municipality dominated by the traders with America, who, at the end of the eighteenth century carried out the bold policy of the development of the river for ocean-going ships. It expanded enormously early in the nineteenth century, becoming at once an important centre of the cotton trade and of the iron and steel industry, as well as a great shipbuilding and commercial centre. But in its rapid period of growth the misery and degeneration of its poorer

inhabitants increased terribly. We have already noticed that the death-rate rose from twenty-eight per thousand in 1821 to forty per thousand in 1843, and at that time typhus was always raging in the courts. Like Liverpool, Glasgow was stirred by the inquiries of the 'forties. The first necessary reform was the improvement of the water supply. In 1853 the step was taken, afterwards imitated by other municipalities under greater difficulties, of obtaining from a mountain area an ample supply of pure water, and Loch Katrine was the source laid under contribution. A fresh movement began in 1856. An Improvement Trust was constituted for the purpose of clearing the most unsanitary areas in the densely crowded parts of the city and for constructing wide streets, while a great variety of schemes for municipal housing were carried out.

There is no city in Great Britain which has a greater variety of municipal activities than Glasgow. It has the most elaborate system for the disposal of refuse, which is sifted and burned or utilised in a great variety of ways. The cleansing department owns over seven hundred railway wagons, and sells the sorted city refuse to firms in half the counties of Scotland. It owns farms, quarries, and workshops. One of its most famous enterprises is its tramways, which, constructed by the city in 1871, were leased to a private company to 1894, when, on the termination of the lease, they were taken over by the city and successfully worked, at first with horse traction and then electrified.

Manchester

Manchester was not incorporated until 1838, and then only after a severe struggle between the progressive and reactionary forces of the city. It was the birthplace of free libraries, the first being established in 1853, and since 1882 its Municipal Art Gallery has been one of the greatest provincial collections in the country. It has been peculiarly successful in making very large profits out of gas,

and annually draws about £50,000 from this source in aid of the rates. The reason of this policy is perhaps to be found in the fact that the city gas company supplies eleven outlying districts. This undertaking, I believe, was the oldest public gas company in the country, for the Commissioners of Police, established by local Act for Manchester in 1824, obtained powers to light Manchester with gas, and in 1843 these powers were transferred to the new Corporation. The period of the public health campaign was marked by the municipalisation of the water supply in 1847, and in 1876 Manchester followed the Glasgow example, and went to Lake Thirlmere for water. But the greatest of all the Manchester enterprises was the completion of the ship canal, after the company formed to construct it exhausted its resources in 1890. For this purpose the city raised no less than £5,000,000. But the charge on the rates, which has been considerable, has now dwindled to nothing.

Birmingham

In many respects the municipal progress of Birmingham is more interesting than that of any other provincial town. Industrially it is remarkable for the long continuance of the small workshops owned by independent masters.

Like Manchester, it had no representation in Parliament before 1832, and it was not until 1838 that it became a corporate town. For a long time it was backward in municipal development, and as in other towns the water supply was the crucial test of the development of its civic spirit. The first proposal for the municipalisation of water was mooted in 1851, but the proposal was defeated. Not until 1869, after a period of increasing death-rates, at last reaching the terrible figure of fifty-three per thousand, was a second attempt made. But if reform was delayed till late, when it came it came with a rush. A local group of enlightened men carried on a strong campaign on behalf of civic progress, and in November 1873, having been

successful in the municipal elections, they elected their spokesman, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, as Mayor. He was three times re-elected, in 1874, 1875 and 1876, and during that period Birmingham, from being the most backward of the great municipalities, became known as the "Municipal Mecca." Water and gas undertakings were both municipalised immediately. A great housing scheme, by which 1,369 houses were built upon forty-five acres of land, was carried out. In 1876 the celebrated Birmingham School of Art was founded. The citizens levied a special rate upon themselves in addition to the usual penny rate for library purposes. Parks and recreation grounds were multiplied, and the bold scheme whereby Corporation Street was built on the site of a central slum was carried out in a manner which excited the admiration of municipal administrators all over the world, and which was imitated later with much less conspicuous success by the London County Council in Kingsway and Aldwych. In the ten years between 1872 and 1882 the Birmingham Municipal debt was increased tenfold, but the municipal assets are no doubt far in excess of the debt.

Birmingham's Influence on the National Life

The municipal progress of Birmingham is specially important as well as specially interesting because of its influence upon the general national development. After the general election of 1880, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain left the municipal for the national field, becoming President of the Board of Trade in Mr. Gladstone's Ministry. It fell to his lot to deal with the problem of electrical enterprise, and he determined that this new industry should be developed as far as possible as a municipal enterprise rather than as one for private profit. So severe were the conditions which his Act of 1882 laid down for the acquisition of private undertakings by Municipal Corporations, that electrical development was seriously checked, and it was found necessary to modify the Act in 1885 so as to

offer sufficient inducement to private capital to do the experimental work which the municipalities shrank from undertaking. But, nevertheless, the effect of Mr. Chamberlain's policy is seen in the fact that a great number of local authorities have from the beginning made themselves responsible for the distribution of electric light and power within their borders.

When towards the end of Mr. Gladstone's government it was resolved to emancipate the agricultural labourer, the influence of Birmingham and of Mr. Chamberlain was shown in the publication of the "unauthorised programme," which advocated the policy of reform for rural government as the logical consequence of the emancipation of the agricultural labourer, much as the reform of municipal government in 1835 followed that of the Reform Act of 1832. Mr. Gladstone instead decided upon making Home Rule for Ireland his chief proposal, but when the Home Rule Bill was thrown out, and the Unionists returned to power in 1886, some of the proposals of the unauthorised programme were carried out by the County Councils Act of 1888. Towards the end of his active career, Mr. Chamberlain applied to the colonies the principles worked out in the beginning of the 'seventies in the city of Birmingham.

London Origins

The municipal development of London has been peculiar. The corporate institutions of London appear to have been of Roman origin, though modified by Anglo-Saxon and Norse influences before the Conquest, and further developed at a favourable opportunity afforded by the Crusades in 1291 by the establishment of the Mayoralty and the Court of Common Council. Their influence has been powerful upon both the development of other cities and upon the constitution of the country as a whole. But when the central power of the King's Government was firmly established in Tudor times, a certain jealousy of

the greatness of London made itself felt. It would almost appear that the turning-point in the history of the city was in the beginning of the seventeenth century, when two tasks competed for its energies. On the one hand there was the problem of an increased and improved water supply; on the other hand the King petitioned for the co-operation of the City in the settlement of Ulster. The City chose for itself the distant enterprise, and put into the hands of a private citizen, Sir Hugh Myddelton, the task of bringing the New River to London.

The population of the great city on the bank of the Thames grew continually. It was really two cities rather than one; and grew from two centres, the one being the commercial and manufacturing City of London proper, the other the royal capital of Westminster. But there was no expansion of the area over which the City Corporation ruled. Lord Burleigh gave Westminster a constitution which was a sort of feeble imitation of that of London, and which in the course of the eighteenth century became overpowered by the Westminster Commission of Sewers and the county and parochial authorities.

London Vestrydom

For the rest of the Metropolitan area the parish was the basis of what local government then existed, and the parish officers or the parish vestry, or the two combined, had to deal with both Poor Law and the general administration. In some parishes there was the "open vestry," which would be attended by the parishioners generally; and in these there was frequent alternation between acquiescence in the corrupt control of the parish governing clique and stormy attempts at reformation. In other parishes select vestries of varying degrees of merit were entrusted with local administration.

Early eighteenth-century parochial government is caustically described by Daniel Defoe, who, under the pseudonym of "Andrew Moreton" declaimed against the Parson's Rate, Church Rate, Poor Rate, Overseers' Rate,

Scavengers' Rate, Sewers Rate, Watch Rate, and Highways Rate, which, he said, "eat poor tradesmen up alive." The parishioners "are ridden to death by these parish jockeys, who know no mercy." He proceeds—

"For all these great sums collected the Poor fare never the better. The Money is parcelled out to make the greatest show, and a few miserable wretches have some 6*d*. some 1*s*. a week to starve upon; which scanty allowance is the reason why our streets swarm with beggars.

"With what Imperiousness do they ride the Parishes? How do they lord it over the poor wretches, who take relief at their hands! And yet these Gentlemen to save charges are brisk enough to hunt a distressed creature from Parish to Parish till they perish for want by the way. How many poor women in Labour have been lost while two parishes are endeavouring to throw her on each other?

"To what end is this outside caution, but to save money for their own Guts, and feast themselves at the Parish Charge?

"But nothing is so profitable to these Gentlemen as Parish Repairs. If the Church is new beautified, whip they come upon you with a Church rate, and when £200 has been expended, £1,200 shall be collected: for Mr. Churchwarden will strive hard but his daughter shall be £1000 the better.

"There is not a greater abuse in the world than that of Select Vestries. It is the most flagrant of tyrannies. All other elective bodies have a Rotation, but these Select Vestries stagnate and stink in the nostrils of their fellow citizens.

"While the election is in themselves we have no hopes of amendment. If they happen to be mistaken in their man, and by chance chuse one honest man among them, he must either absent himself, or come into their measures, otherwise he is like an Owl among

the birds. So that it may be said of the Select Vestry as of the Mint: Let any man go in never so honest, he's sure not to come out so.

"Offices of Burthen, fatigue or expense, are the ministers of their resentment; and the punishment of inquisitive, reasoning or rebellious parishioners; but the sweet posts of profit are reserved for their true and trusty Hell Hounds, who go through stitch with their dirty work, and boggle at nothing, no not the ruin of whole families."

Not all Select Vestries were as bad as this. Some indeed were pure and public-spirited; nevertheless, the vestrydom which Defoe depicts in its very worst form, has been a lingering evil in London life.

After the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1837 the same Commission of Inquiry investigated London government, and made the recommendations that the principles of the Act of 1835 should be applied to London, that the whole of the metropolitan area which from the social and industrial point of view formed part of London, should be brought within the sphere of the Corporation, and that the constitution of the Corporation should be amended so as to bring it into harmony with the Act of 1835. But by this time the Whig Government, though still in office, had lost its hold upon the support of the country, and the Corporation of the City was both powerful and indisposed to purchase extension at the price of a profound change in its peculiar and historic constitution. The proposal, therefore, fell to the ground, though it remained to a considerable extent for generations afterwards a sort of ideal for one school of London reformers, whose motto was "The Unification of London."

The Metropolitan Board of Works

In 1855, after the third visitation of the cholera, and after great reforms had been effected in the sanitary condition of many provincial towns, Sir Benjamin Hall's Metro-

politan Management Act was passed, which gave the larger parishes representative vestries, grouped together the small parishes under District Boards of Works, the members of which were elected by the vestries of the constituent parishes; and created for the whole of London a Metropolitan Board of Works to deal with main drainage, street improvements, protection from fire and the extension of parks and open spaces. The Metropolitan Board of Works left a permanent mark upon London, and coming into existence, as it did, immediately after the London Water Companies had been compelled to move their intakes up the river, its establishment was followed by an enormous improvement in London health. How necessary were the two reforms of creating a main drainage system with outfalls well below the city at Barking and Crossness, and the treatment of the sewage before its discharge into the river, together with that of prohibiting the intake of water for drinking purposes from the centre of the City, may be judged from the fact that in the 'forties three hundred London sewers emptied themselves into the Thames above the lowest intake of the water companies.

Relatively satisfactory as it was, however, the Metropolitan Board of Works was secret in its methods, and was served by officials some of whom were unable to resist the opportunities for public plunder which were offered to them through the carrying out of street improvements. It became known popularly as the "Board of Perks," and repeated Commissions of Inquiry had to be made into its methods. It was already recognised to be an institution that must be abolished, when the County Councils Act of 1888 was drafted. The problem of London had then to be faced, and the area within the administration of the Metropolitan Board of Works was created into the County of London, and the first London County Council was elected in March 1889.

The London County Council

Once again, after several centuries, the real City of London possessed a representative authority empowered to deal with her concerns generally. It is probable that no body of administrators in this country ever reached a higher standard of efficiency and public spirit than the second London County Council, which was elected in 1892, and many of the members of which continued to take a leading part in London affairs through several successive councils. Again and again the Progressive majority received a fresh mandate from the electors of London. But the last time the electoral mandate was renewed, in 1904, the issue upon which the election was fought was a false one. The one effective election cry was "Chinese Slavery." But the Council that sat from 1904 to 1907 had to deal with one of the most important problems that any city has ever had to face, the problem of the generation in bulk of electricity. The Progressive majority on the County Council was pushed somewhat unwillingly into undertaking this task. The details of its scheme were unsatisfactory; the scheme itself was rejected by Parliament and the great issue between municipal and private enterprise was raised under conditions unfavourable to the municipal idea. In 1907 the Progressive party was decisively beaten, at an election marked by a record poll, and by an extraordinarily high expenditure of money for electioneering purposes.

Problems of Local Government

The history of Local Government during the period since 1835 has shown a gradual tendency to rely more and more upon the municipal type of local authority; that type which is characterised by the election of a local council to deal with all sorts of local services. It appears to me that the prestige of the municipality was steadily growing up to the very end of the nineteenth century. In 1888, as we have seen, counties were given a governing authority of the municipal type; in 1894 the same type of government

was established for Urban and Rural districts outside the corporate boroughs; in 1899 the London Government Act created the Metropolitan Borough Councils, with less extensive duties than provincial borough councils, but with larger populations and greater revenues than any but the largest boroughs. In 1902 education was municipalised by the transfer to county, borough and district councils of the duties hitherto exercised by school boards over elementary education, and with the further right of dealing in all sorts of education other than elementary. Again, the active municipal enterprise, which the provincial boroughs began to show in numerous cases from about the year 1870, continued to develop during the period of falling prices, which lasted up to 1896, for this period was also marked by falling rates of interest for municipal securities, money being obtainable at the lowest rates of interest from 1896 to 1899. But the higher rates of interest which have been current since the outbreak of the South African War have considerably checked municipal enterprise, and during the past few years there has been a notable and very regrettable decline in the prestige of municipal institutions.

It appears to me that this lowering of the status of our most important local authorities can be traced to the causes set out below.

It should in the first place be noted that there has been a tendency for the greater local authorities to flourish at the expense of the smaller; for the parish councils, for example, to fade into practical insignificance, and for county councils to take from the importance of district councils. This tendency is shown by the proposals of both the majority and minority reports of the Poor Law Commission to recommend the superseding of the union by the county as the local unit for poor-law purposes; and the tendency to transfer health administration to the counties from the rural district councils. The prestige of municipal government, therefore, depends upon the county councils. But even the county councils, which may be divided into

three types, have each been subject to drawbacks which have militated greatly against their usefulness and standing in the public eye. The councils of rural counties have disappointed the country, because in general they have utterly failed to represent the great body of the people. There is no payment of election expenses for members or payment for lost time. The distances to be traversed in attending a county council meeting are very considerable; and it is, therefore, practically impossible for a man to be a county councillor of an ordinary county unless he belongs to the class that can afford to keep motors. The importance of this drawback is specially felt when the county councils are entrusted with the execution of laws intended to democratise agriculture. Both the Housing Acts and the Small Holdings Acts have received but step-motherly care from the county councils. The only remedy would appear to be payment for time spent and expenses incurred in the work of the councils.

The next type of county council is the council of the county borough. These are on the whole the most effective and the most highly respected of our local authorities. But they, it appears to me, are faced with a peculiar difficulty arising from the centrifugal movement of population which is appearing in all great towns. The phenomenon which was the bane of the civic life of London appears repeatedly at the present time with respect to many provincial towns, the tendency for a larger and larger portion of the population to live outside the municipal area, and to come under the control of a special rural or urban local authority for a particular suburb. This is the natural consequence of the development of the electrical tramcar, the bicycle and motor bicycle, the motor and motor-bus, the cheap season ticket. To a certain extent the problem can be dealt with by means of extension of city boundaries, and the recent policy of the Local Government Board has been to favour such extension as far as possible; but the method of Parliamentary Inquiry and Private Bill for carrying out such extension is cumbrous and expensive.

It should not be a difficult matter to devise a machinery for the continual revision of boundaries where necessary.

The third type of county council has but one representative, the London County Council. It is suffering in a marked degree from the tendency just described, the population in the county area actually being less in 1911 than in 1901. Its prestige appears to me to have suffered also from the results of the two last elections. On the one hand we have been witness of the election of 1910, in which a single vote would have reversed the party complexion of the majority of the Council and its whole policy. We have also noticed the reversal of policies previously adopted after prolonged inquiry and with the sanction of Parliament. It may be right and wise, for example, that the County of London should maintain a steamboat service on the river Thames. On the other hand, to maintain such a service may be a mistake. But what is beyond the possibility of doubt is that it is neither right nor wise for the County Council first to spend large sums of money in purchasing steamboats, and then to sell them for a very small fraction of the sum spent upon them. The municipal prestige of the London County Council must fall lower and lower if it is to become the practice for the electors to hand over the administration of the City first to this party and then to that, and for each party when in the majority to undo what has been done by its predecessors.

Incidentally it may be remarked that there is an important difference in the method by which the London County Council and the London Borough Councils are elected as compared with provincial councils. The whole of the members retire together at the end of the three years in London, while in provincial councils one-third retire each year. Both methods appear to me to be bad, but the London method the more vicious of the two. The obvious remedy, the adoption of proportional representation, is blocked by the hostility of party agents to a plan which to a considerable extent would emancipate the ordinary elector from their control.

CHAPTER XIX

IRELAND AND AGRICULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION

Ireland after the Famine

In Great Britain the working agriculturist gets but little attention and little consideration. There is scarcely a considerable area to be found in the country where the interest of agriculture is not overshadowed by that of manufacture, or of mining, or of the exploitation of the attractions of the seaside, or of field sports. But in Ireland agriculture remains the predominant means of livelihood and the principal concern of the population. This is on the one hand no inconsiderable element in the divergence of mental outlook which makes it so difficult for a single system of government to deal impartially and satisfactorily with the affairs of the two islands. But on the other hand the predominance of agriculture in Ireland has secured the attention of a compact group in the House of Commons for some of the problems of agriculture. Hence Ireland has been for some decades a field for legislative experiment; and the possibility of framing wise laws for the agriculture of Great Britain depends upon the lessons of Irish experience being intelligently studied and applied.

In a previous chapter we have indicated the chief causes of the miserable and chaotic state of Irish agriculture at the time of the famine. Inquiries had already taken place by Parliamentary Select Committees into the Irish Land System in 1819, 1823 and 1825. In each case reforms which would have been of some value were recommended, but no action was taken in consequence, except that valuations of Irish land were made in 1830, 1846 and 1852. The period before the great famine was marked by frequent

minor famines, and also by a bitter struggle over the enforcement of the payment of tithes from starving Catholic peasants for the maintenance of a Protestant Church which they abhorred. The most thorough inquiry of the first half of the seventeenth century was the Devon Commission (presided over by the Earl of Devon) appointed in 1845. But Sharman Crawford's Bill, based on the report of this Commission, for establishing tenant-right, was rejected in 1847.

After the famine it was recognised that the social causes which made the disaster so great must be dealt with; that somehow or other reform must be effected in the system whereby vast numbers of people occupied uneconomically small plots of land, spending the greater part of their efforts and using the greater part of the soil to produce crops to pay their rents, and subsisting themselves on the minor portion of their land by the help of a crop which, though generally prolific, was liable to frequent recurrences of complete failure. But the question arose in whose interest the system should be altered and by what means. Apparently, in the eyes of the British Parliament, the one serious evil of the situation was that when the peasantry died of famine they were unable to pay their rents, and when landlords, who had mortgaged their estates, failed to receive the whole of their accustomed rents, they were in pecuniary difficulties. Hence the choice of the remedy. The Encumbered Estates Act was passed to facilitate the sale of mortgaged lands. These to an enormous extent passed out of the hands of the landlords who had held them for generations, and who were more or less accustomed to honour the ancient convention on which the Irish agricultural system rested, that the tenant, as long as he did his level best to pay his rent, should not be disturbed. These estates were bought up by strangers, money-lenders and others, whose only object was to make a profitable investment, and a terrible time began for the peasantry.

In 1849, 16,686 evictions took place; in 1850, 19,949. In the 34 years, 1849 to 1882, the average number of evictions was 3000 per annum.

In 1850 the Land League was formed, and after ten years of agitation the Irish Land Act of 1860 made some concession to the claim for tenant-right. It was enacted that on the departure of the tenant he should be compensated for such improvements as he had made during his tenancy with the consent of the landlord. But this measure had no soothing effect. It was followed by a general campaign on the part of the landlords of raising of rents and evictions, which was met on the other hand by outrages, resistance to evictions and increased emigration; in 1862 by the formation of the Fenian Society, which made a very futile attempt at armed rebellion in the year 1867, an attempt which was vigorously crushed out.

Mr. Gladstone's Legislation

In Mr. Gladstone's Ministry, which followed the general election of 1868, the problem of Ireland for the first time received the careful and sympathetic consideration of Parliament. To Mr. Gladstone it appeared that there was, as it were, an upas tree with three branches which overshadowed the economic, political and social life of Ireland. The first great evil was the position of ascendancy of the Protestant Church in the midst of a Catholic population; the second was the land system; the third was the fact that the greater part of the Irish population had no opportunity of higher or university education, because the one Irish University, Trinity College, Dublin, was reserved for Protestants alone.

In 1869 Mr. Gladstone disestablished the Irish Church, a measure which immediately and effectively solved one of the three problems which he recognised. Needless to say the proposal was bitterly denounced, but it would be hard to-day to find any considerable body of opinion which would refuse to recognise that this measure was just, wise,

and beneficial. In 1873 Mr. Gladstone attempted to deal with the Irish University problem and failed; this failure being the prelude of his defeat in the general election that followed. Between his signal success and his signal failure came his first Irish Land Act of 1870, which made a considerable advance towards granting the demands of the Irish peasantry, but which in practice did not work very well.

The period of Conservative administration which followed was marked by a steady growth of Irish discontent and by the development of the Irish Nationalist Party, with Home Rule for its object, and independence of British political parties for its method. In 1879 the Irish Land League was reorganised, and the position of Ireland was extremely critical. Mr. Gladstone, who returned to power after the election of 1880, had to deal a second time with the Irish Land Question, and to take it as the most urgent political question at the time. His Act of 1881 did almost as much as any legislative measure could to bring the Irish Land Law into harmony with Irish traditions. It conceded the "three F.'s," fair rent, fixity of tenure, free sale. It created land courts for the sake of determining what was a fair rent for any holding. That fair rent being fixed the landlord could demand no more, nor could he turn out the tenant as long as he paid the rent so fixed. On the other hand, if the tenant wished to go he could sell his good-will, or his interest in the farm, together with the claim to all improvements that he had made, and the incoming tenant was entitled to hold that land at the fair rent. Had the economic circumstances of the time been favourable, it is, I think, very probable that the Act of 1881 would have brought peace to Ireland, and that Irish agriculture would have entered upon an era of increasing prosperity under the dual system of ownership which the 1881 Act set up. Unfortunately the general economic circumstances were most unfavourable.

As we have seen before, the currency changes, which

took place in 1873, and the gradual fall in the output of gold produced a tendency for prices of commodities generally to fall, which continued up to the year 1896. The particular commodities which the Irish peasant produced, and by the sale of which he had to gain the funds wherewith to pay the fair rent fixed by the land courts and to support himself, were no exception to this general rule. By Mr. Sauerbeck's calculations the general index number of food prices for 1878 was 96; for 1879, 90; for 1880, 94. From 1880 it steadily fell till it reached 62 in 1896. This means that in sixteen years food prices fell by one-third.

To understand what was happening in Ireland we must remember that the great expansion in the export of American cereals, which we have already referred to, was as disastrous to the corn-growers of North-Eastern Europe as to those of England. But the Belgian, Dutch and Danish peasantry, and to a certain extent those of Germany and France, met the situation partly by turning their attention to animal produce, milk, butter, cheese, eggs, etc., and partly by organising themselves in various forms of agricultural co-operation, to secure more and better produce and to market it more advantageously. The Irish peasant, to whom government meant the resident police magistrate, with no leadership except the priest on the one hand, more concerned for his orthodoxy and morality than for his worldly prosperity, and the politician on the other, who thought most of the intensity of his nationalist fervour, was very ill-equipped for competing in the London market with the Danish butter producer and egg exporter, stimulated and guided by the best expert advice obtainable by an enlightened and patriotic government. Prices for Irish produce therefore fell, and fell disastrously for some fifteen years after the 1881 Act was passed. In other words, no sooner had the fair rents been fixed by the award of the judges than they were made unfair and excessive by the economic circumstances indicated above.

Another difficulty arose from the fact that those tenants

who had been legally liable for years past for the payment of unfair rents, and who had fallen into arrears, were not protected in the Act of 1881, and over the effort of the landlords to extort these arrears a renewed struggle took place.

The Land Purchase Acts

The actual failure of the Act of 1881 led to the conclusion reached by both Liberal and Conservative administrators with a considerable amount of reluctance, that dual ownership must pass on to the ownership by the cultivator himself. Land Purchase Acts were passed in 1885, in 1891 and 1903, the last being Mr. Wyndham's Act, under which the work of making the Irish tenant the owner of his farm began to proceed rapidly. In 1891 also the Congested Districts Board was set up, with very extensive powers, for acquiring land where the population was scanty, in order to remove to it a part of the population where the holdings were so small that their occupiers could not possibly thrive. The same Board has a remarkably free hand in carrying out measures for the industrial advantage of specially impoverished districts in Ireland, such as improving fishing harbours, assisting fishing and other industries with advice, loans and practical demonstrations of improved methods.

Irish Agricultural Co-operation

But the economic renaissance of Ireland begins with Sir Horace Plunkett's campaign for self-help and co-operation on which he embarked in 1889. In 1894 the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society was founded. Its object was to induce Unionists and Nationalists, Protestants and Catholics to combine together for their own immediate mutual advantage, and for the purpose of lifting Ireland out of the Slough of Despond. Co-operative dairies for the manufacture of butter were the first form of co-operative enterprise pushed forward by the I.A.O.S. These were soon supplemented by other enterprises of a

similar nature. Ireland in 1906 could boast of 270 co-operative dairies, 150 co-operative "supply societies," for the purpose of co-operative purchase, 29 poultry societies, 2 bacon-curing societies. But most interesting of all are the village banks, of which five hundred had been founded by 1905. The members of these banks are individually liable without limit for the debts of the bank, and by this unlimited liability they are able to borrow money from ordinary banks at ordinary interest for the sake of lending it to their own members for productive purposes. The characteristics of the working of these banks are that no dividends are paid to the members, but the profits are accumulated in a reserve fund, which when not needed for mere security is used for the common advantage of the members or of the village; that scarcely anything is paid for salaries and management; that money is rather lent on the personal security of brother members than on marketable security; that every member who applies for a loan must satisfy the committee of the bank that he will use the money in such a way as to leave him with a permanent advantage after repaying the loan with the interest charged on it. It is in the very poorest districts of Ireland that these co-operative banks have taken the greatest hold, and there they have done a great deal to rescue the peasantry from the grip of the money-lender.

It was from the beginning foreseen that this movement of social and agricultural reconstruction would require some assistance from the State. In the year 1899 the Irish Board of Agriculture and Technical Instruction was established upon lines which represented an important advance in the solution of the problem of linking up the activities of the central government with those of local authorities and voluntary organisations. Such a Board in England consists of a Minister and a body of permanent officials in nominal subordination to him. The Irish Board of Agriculture is a committee of considerable numbers, including permanent officials and representatives of the county councils, which have the actual administration of

technical education and many of the laws relating to agriculture. There is in this way a reasonable chance of getting that hearty and intelligent co-operation between the central and local authorities which has always been found so extremely difficult to attain in England. I am informed that already Ireland can boast of a larger proportion of the population receiving technical instruction than any other country in Europe.

Rural Housing

In Ireland, also, one of the most urgent and difficult problems common to that country and to England, the housing of the agricultural labourers, has been dealt with in a vigorous and promising manner. A whole series of measures, called Labourers Acts, the germ of which is to be found in the Irish Land Act of 1881, have gradually established the statutory right of every agricultural labourer to a healthy cottage. If no private owner will offer him such a cottage, he can apply to the rural district council, which on being satisfied that the need exists, must prepare a scheme, and is entitled to take the site and the materials where these are best to be found, paying due compensation. Supposing the rural district council refuses to discharge this duty, the labourer has the right to appeal to the Irish Local Government Board. In addition to these rights there are inducements in the way of grants to encourage rural district councils to build cottages. In some cases, however, these councils build cottages to such an extent as to burden themselves with rates for the purpose approaching 1*s.* in the £, a limit beyond which they may not go. Originally half-acre plots were usually attached to the cottages; but more recently the plots have been larger, and in many cases extra half-acre plots have been added where half-acres were originally provided. Up to the 31st of March 1911, under the Labourers Acts, Ulster had provided 6,103 cottages; Munster, 14,811; Leinster, 12,917; Connaught, 1,588, a total for Ireland of 35,469. The majority of these cottages have over three-

quarters of an acre of garden, and the average rent per cottage with land was 1*s*. per week. The guiding theory appears to be that the rent should not exceed that which the labourer can pay from the produce of the garden, so that we may say the labourer housed under the Acts lives rent free. That the movement is continuing with little abatement may be judged by the fact that nearly 13,000 cottages, in addition to those provided, were authorised at the date above mentioned.

Recent efforts to solve the agricultural problem in Ireland have had the advantage, which the earlier efforts lacked, of favourable economic circumstances. Reference has been made to the continual fall in the prices of food up to 1896. Since then there has been a considerable recovery, and one which is likely to be maintained in the immediate future. For on the one hand the enormous increase in the world's production of gold that has characterised the last few years is likely to maintain general prices, and perhaps to further enhance them. On the other hand the balance of profit between agriculture and manufacture is likely to be redressed somewhat to the advantage of agriculture. All over the world manufacturing plants are developing in efficiency. The margin of difference in price between the raw material and the manufactured article tends to fall, except where it is maintained by monopoly; and there is an increasing pressure upon all extractive industries for the supply of food and raw material. The extreme cheapening of agricultural products at the end of the nineteenth century was to a great extent due to the continued exploitation of one new country of great fertility after another. But though a good deal of further progress can be made in this direction, so little of the temperate regions of the world remains to be freshly opened up that this movement, tending to relatively cheapen agricultural products, can no longer keep pace with the movements which tend to relatively cheapen manufactures. The tendency is for each great country which in the past has developed the exportation of food on an

enormous scale—*e.g.*, the United States, Canada, the Argentine, Australia, India—now to develop manufacturing industries, and to have a diminished surplus of food available for export.

Hopes of Prosperity

The figures for Irish population appear to show that the diminution which has been taking place for seventy years has now at last been checked. It is reasonable to expect that the census of 1921 will show a larger Irish population than that of 1911. It will, in fact, not be surprising if within another thirty years the population of Ireland again exceeds that of Scotland. Various figures could be quoted to show that the population, which is now practically stationary, has already become more prosperous. Let us take those of the Income-Tax Commissioners. Under Schedule B they show that the total of incomes derived from the occupation of land, which over all parts of the British Isles has been declining in recent years, for Ireland reached its minimum point in 1903–4, £3,238,276; that 1909–10 showed an increase on this of £18,110. During the same period the total for Scotland fell by £15,595 and that for England by £154,457. If we turn to Schedule D, which shows the incomes from trade, all three countries show an increase between the years mentioned, but while the amount of increase of England and Wales was 11·5 per cent. and for Scotland 5·4 per cent., the percentage of increase for Ireland was 25·7 per cent.

It would, however, be misleading to refer to these evidences of growing prosperity in Ireland without making reference to the great pecuniary advantage obtained, especially by the poorer districts, from the Old Age Pensions Act. This brings into the country an income which is some set-off against the heavy tribute that Ireland has had to pay for many generations to absentee landlords.

In various ways Great Britain has begun to learn from Irish experience. An English Agricultural Organisation Society was formed in 1901, and by the end of 1910 it had

396 agricultural co-operative societies affiliated to it. A similar society making similar progress has been formed for Scotland. Agricultural colleges have been developed by county councils, and the Cambridge School of Agriculture has done great service to agricultural science by its experiments in the operation of the laws of heredity, experiments likely to yield the most fertile results in the improvement of food plants and breeds of domestic animals.

A great campaign for the democratising of agriculture has been initiated by the Small Holdings Act of 1907, which is getting put more or less into operation in spite of the indifference of the county councils, and the extraordinary mistake of its framers in putting its administration into the hands of a department (the Tithes and Inclosure Commission, rechristened the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries) which was created for the purpose of giving landlords a free rein in the management of agricultural land. Both the Liberal and Conservative parties are preparing to pledge themselves to further this movement; the former by a policy not yet announced; the latter by multiplying small owners. But even now there remains a degree of indifference to the rural problem which is specially difficult to account for among our professed Imperialists. From the Imperialist point of view the rural districts of the British Isles should, obviously, be looked upon as a great agricultural college; and the chief end of rural administration should be the turning out of great numbers of sturdy, able and enterprising men and women to till the broad lands of the Britains beyond the seas. The multiplication of small holdings, a statutory sufficient minimum wage for agricultural labourers, housing reform on Irish lines, the development of agricultural education, and the reorganisation of the transport of agricultural produce, are proposals which demand earnest consideration from this point of view.

CHAPTER XX

BRITISH INDUSTRY AND INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

THE dominant features of British industrial progress from 1846 to 1876 were a tremendous advance in manufacture and commerce, continually increasing foreign trade with growing exports of British manufactures and growing imports of food and raw materials, with agricultural decline relatively, but only relatively. The following twenty years were marked by an absolute decline in agriculture and a cessation of the previous easy triumphs of British manufacture. Foreign competition was first seriously felt in corn-growing, then in meat and other animal products, then in manufacture. The history of British industry during this period is, in fact, the history of the response of the British nation, in the organisation of business, in political action and in political and economic thought, to the outside influence of the strain and pressure of foreign competition. In two great departments of industrial life, however, the supremacy of Great Britain has remained unchallenged: (1) in the ship-building and carrying industries; (2) in finance.

Our agricultural statistics show the influence of the world movement for improving and accelerating the means of transport and opening out new countries. Two factors of extreme importance have been the superseding of sailing vessels by steamships and the development of cold storage, which is dependent on the latter, as the ship's engines drive the freezing machinery. The development of wheat-growing on an enormous scale in the Prairie States of America, in Canada and in the Argentine was simultaneous

with the development of the railway system of India and Russia, which also caused these countries to develop a great export trade in wheat. Continually falling prices of cereals produced a continual shrinkage in the area of British land under wheat and under corn crops generally, a movement which reached its maximum in 1904. Cold storage, which made it possible to convey meat even from the Antipodes at a sufficiently low charge, began to operate from 1880, but it has grown to such an extent that in 1910, while the imports of wheat and wheat-meal into the United Kingdom were valued at £44,160,884 and £5,510,915, the imports of meat, dead and alive, amounted to £48,878,947, and of butter, cheese, and eggs to £24,493,450, £6,812,371, and £6,296,145 respectively.

But foreign competition has been to an increasing degree transferred from agriculture to manufacture. With a certain amount of alarm and of surprise the British manufacturer has watched the transformation of America and Germany in particular into great manufacturing countries. The export of wheat from the United States was 10,678,000 bushels in 1861; it continued to rise until 1902, when it reached a maximum of 154,856,000 bushels, but then began to oscillate, falling to 4,395,000 in 1905, the lowest figure on record for many years, but recovering to 100,771,000 bushels in 1908. What is true of wheat is true of American agricultural products generally. Thus fresh beef exported to the extent of 351,000,000 lbs. in 1901 fell to 201,000,000 lbs. in 1908; bacon exported to the extent of 650,000,000 lbs. in 1898 fell to 241,000,000 lbs. in 1908; lard at the same time from 709,000,000 lbs. to 603,000,000 lbs. On the other hand, while only 647,000 pairs of boots and shoes were exported in 1894, 6,552,000 were exported in 1908. Machinery and agricultural implements appear in the figures for 1861 to the extent of $7,940 worth; in 1874 this had increased to $4,708,000 worth. In 1894 the two are divided, and we have $5,028,000 worth of agricultural implements and $15,825,000 for machinery. In

1907 agricultural implements to the value of $26,936,000 and machinery to that of $90,056,000 were exported.

American Industrialism

The extraordinary natural wealth of the United States of America in minerals and agricultural resources is indicated by the fact that the great republic stands first among the nations of the world in the production of wheat, of oats and of maize, second in cattle, first in fish and tobacco, and has about sixty per cent. of the world's output of raw cotton. It also far surpasses all other nations in annual production of coal, iron, petroleum, lead and copper, and stands second to the Transvaal in the production of gold, and to Mexico in the production of silver. The existence of these huge resources waiting for exploitation in a vast country of relatively small population, but that population recruited from the most enterprising spirits of every country of Europe, is, itself, one of the dominating circumstances determining the character of American industrialism. But certain historical and sociological forces are scarcely less important. Puritanism left a distinct mark on the New Englander, which, too, has in turn imposed its influence upon the social ideals of modern America. It emphasised the ideal of self-conquest, of the training of the will into obedience to a settled plan in life, and into mastery over the straining impulses towards pleasure and the human weakness which continually tempts us to be idle and to procrastinate.

The conditions of desperate struggle with natural disadvantages under which the colonies on the border of the Atlantic grew up, naturally emphasised this Puritan ideal of character and conduct and directed its influence into a material channel. To succeed became not only a thing desirable in itself, but also the mark of the human qualities most highly prized. Throughout the later development of the United States this original disposition to put a higher

value upon material success and the acquisition of wealth as honourable personal achievements, than would be put upon them in Europe, has been encouraged by the political and social institutions of the country, which on the one hand offered the chance of an industrial career and of wealth to the vigorous seeker of all countries, and on the other allowed no place for the competing titles to social distinction which exercise so great an influence in older countries. One important result is that whereas the British business man, who has accumulated a certain measure of wealth, is disposed to retire entirely or in part, to buy land and to build a country house, to entertain the county and patronise sport, the American business man, who has reached the same stage in the growth of his income, then considers that the time is come to really begin business on an effective scale.

The material and sociological conditions of America have combined to create the characteristic American business organisation of the trust. The trust in its most characteristic form may be described as a monopoly that has grown out of competitive industry. The Standard Oil Company, the conception of which was formed apparently in the brain of Peter Watson, Freight Agent to the Erie Railway Company in 1870, but was afterwards built up during the 'seventies and 'eighties by the Rockefeller brothers and H. H. Rogers and their associates, proved to America and the world how vast are the profits of an industrial monopoly in an important commodity when effectively organised on a national, and even more on an international, scale. The development of trusts has since become the foremost feature in the industrial life of America, and the trust issue the dominant issue in American politics.

The influence of American industrial development upon that of our own country has been direct and powerful. When the American trusts emerged from a powerful national field of operations into the world market, in some instances, as in the screw trade and in the tobacco trade,

the American organisation created a similar British organisation by its direct pressure. But the principle of monopoly in industry once developed easily spreads in industries carried on with elaborate and expensive machinery, working under such conditions that a large output can be produced at a cheaper rate per unit than a small output. In such conditions it is profitable for large manufacturers to extend their works, and when the extension has taken place they must needs seek to maintain their plants in full activity. They are thus driven to compete with one another more and more fiercely until a point is reached at which they must carry on war to the death against one another or combine. These conditions, it is needless to say, become increasingly prevalent as the machinery of industry is developed and transit improves. British industry, no doubt, would have tended to monopoly in any case, but its progress in that direction has been very much hurried by the influence of America.

America has also influenced the business methods of Great Britain by shaking them out of their old conservatism. On the one hand we have had, particularly in the engineering firms and railways, a campaign in the direction of "speeding up," the Government workshop of Woolwich Arsenal being as much affected as any private business. In the Arsenal during recent years a large number of special officials have been appointed for the purpose of cutting piece-rates and reducing the time spent by a workman over any particular job. This is a method of workshop organisation which has its dangerous side. It is likely to lead to inferior workmanship, and it undoubtedly creates great resentment among the men employed, who see a larger output turned out at a lower cost by a reduced staff. The individual workman probably finds that his weekly wages, if he is still employed, are rather increased than reduced, but a new anxiety is brought into his life, and the nervous strain on him is exaggerated to an extent for which he is in no way compensated by any

increase of pay that he is likely to get. The "speeding up" system is no inconsiderable element in the growing movement known as "Labour Unrest." Other features of American workshop management, the ready disposition to scrap machinery when better can be had, the disposition to encourage employees of all ranks to exercise their intelligence in the improvement of processes, and the disposition to pay proportionately higher wages for work which is rapid and effective, have to a certain extent also been adopted in Great Britain under the American influence. The movement of "Industrial Betterment" can hardly be said to have originated in America rather than in England, but it has become more self-conscious through American example; and America has taught us that there are advertising and other advantages to the firm that makes a special study of the general well-being of its employees, which may in many cases cause investments for such purposes to be pecuniarily profitable.

Again I think we must partly attribute to American influence a subtle change which has taken place in the ethical ideals popular to-day among the governing classes. Mr. James Douglas, in one of those thoughtful papers which he is accustomed to contribute to the ostensibly flippant pages of *London Opinion,* points out that the attitude of well-to-do London towards the miseries of the families of the dock labourers in the summer of 1912, was very much harder and less sympathetic than at the time of the great dock strike of 1889. Though soon after he wrote more vigorous efforts to raise funds for feeding the starving population of East and South London were made, I still think his observation was a just one. The type of business man that is held up to admiration in current popular fiction is very far removed from that of Cheeryble brothers. American influence seems to have combined with industrial and political tendencies to give a Nietzschean trend to the ethics which are subtly instilled into the minds of young men; an admiration of hard and unsympathetic

qualities being substituted for the cult of more Christian virtues.

On the social influence of wealthy Americans on the British governing classes, and particularly on the mating of young men of aristocratic families with American heiresses, much might easily be written. But it is not easy to write at once briefly and judiciously on the subject.

German Influence

The influence of Germany on contemporary British industrial development has been less direct but even more important than that of America. Germany is both a relatively new and a relatively old industrial country compared with England. On the one hand, up to the Franco-Prussian War and for some years afterwards Germany was a poor country, remarkable for the thrift of its peasantry and for the simplicity of life of its middle classes. When the war was over the energies that had been absorbed in achieving German unity and creating the Empire were concentrated upon industrial development. Some assistance was obtained from the French indemnity; but the greatest single cause of the huge industrial expansion that began about 1880 was Mr. Thomas's invention of the basic Bessemer process of making steel. This at a stroke converted the huge deposits of highly phosphoric iron ores in Germany, reckoned at about double the deposits of iron ores in the British Isles, from almost valueless into extremely valuable raw material. The production of ore, which was only 4,712,000 metric tons in 1876, rushed up to 26,734,600 metric tons in 1906. Steel making is one of the fundamental industries. It provides the raw materials for the industries which equip a nation with the means of cheap and efficient manufacture and transport, with railway engines, machinery, ships, and the framework of industrial buildings of the modern type.

But Germany is also a relatively old industrial country.

When the Hanseatic League was at the height of its power and the cities of the Rhine Valley and of the coasts of the Baltic and of the North Sea developed their early greatness, England was but the sheep-farm of the League, as Poland was its granary. An ancient industrial tradition and an ancient respect for civilisation and for learning was handed down in Germany from this older period of prosperity, through generations of warfare. Hence while general elementary education is a comparatively new thing in England and technical education of still more recent growth, both are of old standing in Germany. Saxony has a technical school for every thirteen thousand of population, but these are the gradual growth of two hundred years. Germany has learnt the value of research, of the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, and is, therefore, better equipped than any nation in the world, with the possible exception of Japan, to turn to account every advance in invention.

But if the ancient civilization of Germany is a considerable force in the achievement of industrial success to-day, not less important perhaps is the character that has been imposed on the German people through centuries of suffering through war; the Thirty Years' War, the wars of the reign of Louis XIV, the later series of dynastic struggles of the eighteenth century, and finally the Napoleonic wars. Germany emerged from these with the principle of discipline firmly implanted in the people. Individual discipline for the sake of the national welfare was the principle underlying both the gymnastic clubs and the short service army, which raised Prussia from its prostration after Jena. The principle of the German Government to-day may perhaps be expressed in the formula that the individual must become at once active, efficient and docile, that he may serve the State; and the State must care for the well-being of each individual in order that he may be able to give it good service. In practical detail the German principle finds expression in the utilisation in common service

of the best and best-trained brains of the male population. Hence State business and city business is conducted with a high general average of efficiency, with the natural consequence that it grows in comparison with private business. Thus, for example, the state of Prussia is the largest owner of mines and mineral properties in the kingdom. It owns over seven million acres of forest and a million acres of agricultural land, and is continually adding to this area. It owns and works the railways and a number of minor industries. It derives a net revenue from properties and industries, which it itself controls, of over thirty millions annually. The Empire and the several states have developed similarly, and so have individual cities. The public assets include besides forests, mines, lands, railways, smelting works, posts and telegraphs, such varied industries as banks, printing works, tobacco factories, porcelain factories, and newspapers. The German Empire and the several states have really no debt, for the imperial and State assets are far greater than the public indebtedness.

The gradual development of State Insurance against sickness, accidents, old age and invalidity, has proceeded side by side with the war against consumption and the development of State care for the health of children.

With regard to German industrial policy two features may here be noted. There is a far greater disposition among German business men to co-operate than among British. If a great deal has been said truly in late years about the superiority of the German commercial traveller to the British, the explanation largely lies in the fact that the German bagman is the employee of an association of firms engaged in export business, which can naturally employ better trained men, send its agents to a greater number of foreign commercial centres, and enable them to offer dealers a greater variety of wares than can any isolated firm. German law, again, encourages the formation of associations of manufacturers and of traders, even when these associations become monopolies. Thus, while

American law endeavours to prohibit the formation of trusts and drives them into formal dissolution, German law favours the formation of Cartels, and does not even interpose any serious objection to the maintenance of a higher price by the Cartel for its products in the home market than in the foreign market. This policy of developing exports is again favoured by the State railways, which, though generally run for the purpose of yielding a large net revenue, offer very low rates for goods intended for the foreign market.

Lastly, it is well to note the German policy with regard to University training. In England debates on the curricula of the older and wealthier Universities easily turn on the question of the merits of education for culture and utilitarian education. The principle of the German University is a far higher one than any which seems to be regarded as possible in England. It is education for public service. For this reason while the teachers of the University have immediate control, the ultimate power rests in the hands of the State, and from the State are derived the funds. For this reason also University education is made widely accessible.

The British nation has not found it as easy to learn from Germany as from America, yet much has been and is being learnt. The whole of our movement for technical education is a frank imitation of the German example; so also are open-air schools, which are as yet but poorly developed, but which have considerably rationalised and improved the methods of the ordinary schools. Similarly the movement for the creation of sanatoria and dispensaries for consumption is mainly prompted by Germany; and the National Insurance Act, on its health side, is an attempt to do more by one great measure than Germany has hitherto achieved by gradual development of her system. At the moment of writing it is still doubtful whether in the drafting of the Insurance Act sufficient allowance was made for the difference between the social characters which historical causes have created respectively in England and

in Germany. The Briton is comparatively new to compulsory education; he has not yet undergone compulsory military training; he is apt to say, and to feel, when required to contribute his fourpence a week, "It is not the paying I mind, it is being compelled to pay. That goes against the grain."

On the whole it would appear that it is much to be regretted that the Government did not, instead of going to Germany for inspiration, adopt the policy recommended in the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission, and create a national health service, based on the municipal service of medical officers of health, and supervised by a Ministry of Health.

"Tariff Reform"

The realisation by Englishmen of both American and German industrial progress, and the pressure of their competition in the home markets as well as in neutral markets, have combined to produce a re-examination of the British fiscal system. In 1885 the "Fair Trade" movement sprang up, largely under the instigation of sugar manufacturers hit by continental bounties on sugar. As long as trade was depressed this movement made some headway. It died down with the revival of trade in 1888 and 1889, but a similar movement revived later in the depression of 1893 and 1895. The publication of Mr. E. E. Williams's book, *Made in Germany*, acted as a stimulus to the creation of a new protectionist movement, different from the protection of the 'forties, in that it aimed rather at protection of manufacturers than of agriculture. The only legislative result of this movement of any importance was the series of Merchandise Marks Acts, 1887 to 1894, which had the untoward effect of advertising rather than of stigmatising foreign manufactures. Before the next depression of trade—that which followed the South African War—in 1904 and 1905, the London School of Economics had been created and the Economic Chair of the University of Birmingham. Professor Hewins of London and Pro-

fessor Ashley of Birmingham became the founders of a new school of protectionist thought in England, which to a considerable extent derives its doctrines from the teaching of Frederick List. List died in Germany in 1846. He did a great deal to supply an intellectual basis for the protective systems both of his native country and America, where he was resident from 1823 to 1829. His essential doctrine is that the policy of the State towards industry should be guided by the consideration that when a particular industry is carried on the nation acquires, not only the product of that particular industry but also industrial power. To use a homely analogy, the disciple of the English Free Trade school of Economics would regard it as absurd to grow cabbages in his back garden unless he could in that way secure them more cheaply than by buying them; the disciple of List would also take into calculation the gain of muscular power and of health which he might derive from the exercise of digging. List's argument is specially pertinent in the case of manufacturing industries coming under what is known as the "Law of Increasing Returns." It operates very forcibly in those industries in which the small and young business has but little chance against one which is already firmly established and working on a large scale. Thus, for example, in the case of a country like Australia, which has coal and wool and a population requiring woollen garments. By List's principles it is desirable that a protective duty should be temporarily imposed on imported woollen goods. It is argued that without such a duty it will be in the immediate present cheaper to export the wool and to import it in the form of cloth, because any woollen manufacture which may be established would be inefficient during its early stages of development; but that if the struggling woollen manufacture receives protection it can grow to a larger scale with corresponding gain in efficiency, so that ultimately it can dispense with protection and supply the needs of the people more cheaply than the foreign manufacturer would. We may, therefore, represent List's principles as

advocating the use of a protective fiscal policy by the State for encouraging the fullest possible utilisation of the natural resources of the country, by encouraging the more intensive industry at the expense of the more extensive. Generally speaking, this principle bars out the protection of agriculture; though it may be used to justify an encouragement of the growing of cereals at the expense of pasture. On the other hand, it justifies the protection of manufacture at the expense of agriculture, only in countries where manufactures are young and capable of a development in which they are impeded by foreign competition. Another point on which List lays great stress is the importance of internal free trade and of the development of internal means of communication.

It is clear that List's system of national economy, if applied directly to the case of the British Isles, is favourable rather to the doctrine of free trade than that of protection. His arguments would forcibly condemn the taxation of imports of food and raw materials; and they cannot, as he stated them, be used directly to advocate the protection of manufactures generally, except where cases can be found of "infant industries" checked in their development by foreign competition. A considerable concession to the List doctrine has been made, though without infringing upon the principles of free trade, by Mr. Lloyd George's modification of the Patent Laws, which deprives foreign inventions of their monopoly if they are not utilised in Britain. It is further possible to argue that the same principle which has been applied to "infant industries" may be applied also to those industries which have been outstripped in development by foreign examples. Thus, for example, the British neo-protectionists drew special attention to the case of steel, in which industry the largest British plants are small indeed compared with either the largest firms combined in the American Steel Company or with Messrs. Krupp's in Germany. Their pessimistic prognostications, however, have not been justified by later experience.

But our Tariff Reformers' way of viewing the question, in 1904 at any rate, was from the point of view of the whole British Empire rather than of the British Islands. Great Britain is a country of dense population and of high industrial and commercial development in comparison with its natural resources. It obviously stands to lose by the development of an international system of tariffs, which must tend to make each country's industrial development proportional to its natural wealth in food-producing power and production of raw material. If we consider the case of the British Isles alone, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that foreign tariffs are as a rule best met by free imports. But if we consider instead the whole British Empire, we see that it is an immense area, with enormous potentialities for production, which are but very slightly developed. List's principles applied to the British Empire would, therefore, indicate the advisability of a policy of protective tariffs against foreign countries, combined with one of internal free trade within the Empire, and by a vigorous State policy of the development of an inter-imperial steamship service and telegraphs, and to the building of railways in the less developed portions. There was no doubt originally a hope that imperial preference would lead to such an imperial customs union. But apart from this hope imperial preference was advocated as an approximation to the more desirable but less practicable system.

It is unfortunate that the case between free trade and neo-protectionism has had to be argued before a public which has been denied any general education in economics, and therefore is not well prepared to understand the sounder arguments on both sides. The controversy has, therefore, degenerated, through the irresistible temptation offered to both sides to rouse prejudices and to use arguments, however unsound, which happen to appeal to the uninstructed voter. The suggestion was made that the whole controversy should be referred to a Royal Commission, and but for the difficulty of selecting Royal

Commissioners at once competent and unbiased, the suggestion would have been an admirable one. Still, by slow degrees a sort of approximation towards agreement is being achieved. Free traders, on the one hand, have generally abandoned their original doctrinaire attitude of condemnation of any State interference with industry for the purpose of fostering its development. They are even disposed to concede that conceivable cases might be found where a protective tariff temporarily imposed for the benefit of a particular industry might be of advantage to the whole community; and they raise their objection to the protective policy on the ground, first, that in a democratic and representative Government the choice of industries to be protected would be determined by political pressure, and not by unbiased expert advice, so that the industries in which protection would be advantageous would very likely fail to get protected, while those might be protected in which protection would be mischievous. They also lay stress on the argument that the struggle to obtain protection would corrupt the legislature, and divert the energies of industrial leaders from the profitable field of improving their processes into the disastrous channel of lobbying at Westminster. They are disposed, instead of insisting upon an attitude of *laisser-faire,* to recommend that alternative and less dangerous methods of State action for the development of industry should be developed. It was even recommended by Mr. Sidney Webb that it would be better to give bounties to imports from the colonies rather than to levy taxes on imports from foreign countries.

It is less easy to see any well marked change in the attitude of protectionists, but we may note that the hope of advance through imperial preference towards an imperial Zollverein appears to be chimerical; for the very arguments on which the neo-protectionist case rests lead to the conclusion that it is to the interest of Canada, Australia and India to protect their manufacturing industries, actual and potential, against the competition of Great Britain. Dr. Cunningham's recent publication, *The Case Against Free*

Trade, goes so far as to advocate that each great colony should have its own colonial protective system, in order to develop a variety of industries within its own area, only levying higher duties on imports from foreign countries than those of the rest of the empire. There is, further, a disposition on the part of the protectionist to weaken on the subject of import taxes on food. The original idea of this part of the scheme was that in return for such an encouragement to colonial agriculture, the colonies should entertain an attitude of indifference as to whether the manufactured goods which they purchased were made within their own colony or not as long as they were made within the empire. Unfortunately not only do the neo-protectionist principles apply just as forcibly to the greater dependencies as they do to the combined British Empire; but also British farmers and the owners of agricultural land are little disposed to favour a protective system which does not put up food prices.

Nevertheless the "Tariff Reformers" have practically conceded one of the principal contentions of the Free Traders, that abundant and cheap supplies of food and raw material are essential to the prosperity of the British Isles.

It would therefore appear that the readiest means of obtaining a common policy which can be accepted as a temporary compromise by both schools of thought is to leave aside, at least for a while, any encouragement of national industry by means of protective tariffs and to develop first a policy of their encouragement by direct State action. The National Development Grant is a step in this direction. Other steps which, in my opinion, deserve consideration, are—

(1) A programme of educational reform, including:

(*a*) Compulsory technical training for boys from fourteen to seventeen years of age, and making boys of this age half-timers.

(*b*) Smaller classes in elementary schools and more effective training of the intelligence.

(*c*) The cultivation of the scientific spirit in the universities.

(2) The encouragement of invention by direct pecuniary rewards to the inventor himself, instead of by the conferring of monopoly rights on the holder of the invention.

(3) The enlisting of able industrialists and inventors in the service of the State.

(4) The substituting for the Boards of Trade and Agriculture, and the Local Government Board, of Departments for: (*a*) Shipping, Fisheries and Sea Traffic; (*b*) Internal Transport and Mines; (*c*) Agriculture and Forestry; (*d*) Labour; (*e*) Public Health.

(5) Reform of the rating system, so that it ceases to be a heavy tax on housing and on the investment of capital in our own country.

(6) The programme of rural reform indicated in the last chapter.

It is most desirable that some common ground of policy should be found. The controversy between the two fiscal policies is one in which powerful vested interests are concerned, and the intrusion of these interests into the discussion of a problem of national well-being, sufficiently difficult in itself, complicates and embitters the issue. There is a tendency on both sides to grossly exaggerate the net economic gain or loss to the country as a whole of a system of free imports on the one side and of small import duties on the other. There is also a tendency to subordinate to the fiscal issue other matters in which definite progress may be made, and for which a much larger share of public attention is demanded. As, further, the tendency of a spell of adversity is to assist the efforts of those who are challenging whatever tariff system happens to be in force, there is danger that when the political forces on either side are pretty evenly balanced, the country may oscillate between the two systems and so suffer greater loss and damage than from a continued adherence to even the worse of the two.

CHAPTER XXI

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN RECENT YEARS

Socialism and Labour

We have previously described the condition of depression into which trade unionism fell during the slump in trade which reached its climax in 1879. To a certain extent, what had happened was not only that the economic circumstances had become difficult, but also the ideals and methods of the school of trade unionism that had come into prominence some thirty years before had done their work, and were no longer adequate to the needs of the time. The old claim had practically been that the manual workers should have some share in the expanding wealth of the nation. Once more, as in the beginning of the century, a time was about to come when the increase in national wealth no longer took the form of a continuous growth, but advanced and receded like the flowing and ebbing tide, though remaining always at a very much higher level than in the earlier period of violent fluctuation. At the same time, a great deal of the work of establishing political democracy had been achieved and more was on the point of being accomplished. A new intellectual movement among the manual workers then heralded in a new industrial movement.

Just as the changed economic conditions were largely dominated by the development of foreign competition, specially that of America and Germany, so the new development of economic and political thought among the manual workers of Great Britain owed a great deal to these

same countries. About the year 1880 Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* was widely circulated, and began to exercise a very stimulating effect. The British worker might or might not be convinced of Henry George's contention that the power of the landlord to extort rent was the cause of increasing or continuing poverty in the midst of increasing wealth; he was in any case likely to be strongly moved by the contention that poverty increased side by side with wealth, that it increased because the increasing wealth was more and more unequally distributed, and that the evil arose from human law and not from inevitable forces of Nature. The ground which was first broken by Henry George was soon more deeply ploughed by the English disciples of the German Socialist movement. Where Henry George fixed upon the landowners, these fixed upon the capitalists as the enemy, and they demanded a broader remedy than the Single Tax, viz. the nationalisation of all other means of production as well as of land. To the urban worker particularly this doctrine was the more reasonable of the two, for he comes into direct contact with the employer rather than with the receiver of ground rents, and he knows of more great incomes built upon the conduct of industry than upon the ownership of land. He might or might not regard the nationalisation of the means of production as being practicable, or as being likely to cure existing evils without producing a crop of fresh ones. But he was at any rate capable of seeing, when the point was vigorously pushed home to him, that the private appropriation of interest, rent and profits enabled a few to spend in luxury vast sums, which would, if added to wages, extinguish poverty. The broad idea of the solidarity of the working-classes and of the need for artisan and clerk and labourer to stand side by side, particularly in defence of the poorest section of the general body, began to take root and to develop. The seed once planted has continued to grow ever since.

The great depression of 1879, and the return of bad

times after a brief burst of industrial prosperity between 1881 and 1883, also, was marked by a great movement of social compunction among the middle classes. To this date belongs the publication of *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London,* the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor, the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Sweating System, and the beginning of Mr. Charles Booth's investigations into the actual condition of London. The poverty of great masses of the people was beginning to be recognised not merely as a personal inconvenience to those who happened to be poor, but as nothing less than a great social disease, bringing with it a complexity of other social diseases. A campaign against intemperance had been working for generations. It was now beginning to be realised that drunkenness is a consequence of lack of necessary food, of necessary fresh air and rest, as well as a cause of poverty. A fresh outburst of evangelical zeal which created the Salvation Army, also brought with it a further realisation of the inter-relation of physical, economic and moral evils. Thus both for the working classes and for the middle classes the period between 1880 and 1889 was one of searching of heart and of stimulus to broader and deeper thinking.

The Great Dock Strike

Such was the intellectual preparation preceding one of the most stirring episodes in the century of the trade-union movement in Great Britain. To a certain extent the new thought concentrated itself upon London, where oratory in the open spaces and lecturing in the clubs had been used most lavishly to explain the doctrines of Socialism. It was with the poverty, destitution and misery of the East End that scientific or emotional literature had been particularly concerned; it was to organise the masses of unskilled and casual labour that the new leaders of the Labour Movement devoted their efforts. They needed the

encouragement of success, and that was supplied in a striking way in July 1888.

The old experience of trade unionism had developed certain generally accepted principles with regard to the science of industrial warfare. It had become the established doctrine that battles were won by thorough organisation, by ample funds, and by the vantage-ground of a monopoly of industrial skill, so that when the organised craftsmen withdrew their labour there was but a small margin of unorganised men who could possibly take their place. In the match-girls' strike every known advantage was lacking to the girls, every known disadvantage operated against them. Though some six hundred of them had unexpectedly come out on strike after a rousing article had been published by Mrs. Besant on their wrongs in the *Link*, they had no organisation except one hastily improvised, they had no funds, and, however bad their pay and their conditions of work, it was well known that there were thousands of other girls sufficiently competent who would be willing to take their places. Yet the match-girls won an immediate and complete victory. This was done by the forces of publicity and by an appeal to the clerical and other shareholders in the firm of Bryant & May.

It was then seen that all the old ideas of trade-union tactics and strategy required to be corrected, and that hitherto unexpected forces were in existence which tended to give victory to the weak rather than to the strong.

A new hopefulness began to animate the efforts of those who were organising unskilled labour in London. The Gas Workers and General Labourers' Union was established in May 1889, and almost immediately secured, without a strike, the establishment of an eight-hours day in the London gas works, a victory which had the effect of vastly increasing the numbers of unskilled workers regularly employed by the gas works, and so temporarily diminishing the margin of unemployed labour on the London labour market. Mr. Ben Tillett passed on from assisting

the organising of the Gas Workers to the organising of the Dock Labourers. On the 12th of August an insignificant dispute at the South West India Dock led to the formularising of the demand for a minumum wage of 6*d*. instead of 5*d*. an hour, with a minimum engagement of four hours. The demand became general, and within three days ten thousand dock labourers abandoned the work which they had been in the habit of fighting for at the dock gates. The stevedores, the more skilled and better paid men whose business it is to load ships, threw in their lot with the dockers, and public sympathy rallied to their side. The weather was fine—no inconsiderable element in the situation. Subscriptions came from all over the country in aid of Dockers to the extent of some £18,000. But the most remarkable feature of this strike was the fact that over £30,000 was telegraphed to London in aid of the strikers from Australia. Practically the whole of the demands of the men were conceded.

The New Unionism

Immediately a sort of double wave of trade unionism spread, on the one hand throughout the ports of the United Kingdom among the seamen and firemen, the dockers, gas workers, and other unskilled labourers; on the other through all the trades of London. During the rest of the year 1889 there was a ferment of continual reorganisation, and of demands—generally successful—for higher wages, shorter hours, and redress of grievances generally. In so far as new unions were formed, they were largely of unskilled labourers, and of a very simple type of organisation. In view of the poverty of their members, and of the fact that all the more thrifty and prosperous of them were already members of benefit societies, it was impossible for such a union as the Dock, Wharf and Riverside Labourers, or the Gas Workers and General Labourers, to ask for any but a very small weekly contribution; it was therefore impossible for them to offer benefits on any extensive scale

beyond victimisation pay and strike pay. They therefore depended on an appeal quite different from that of the earlier type of unions in the skilled trades. At the same time, the special forces aiding trade unionism which existed among the cotton operatives and the miners were not to be found among the unskilled labourers. The strength of the union, therefore, depended almost entirely on moral forces. A man had to be impelled to stand firm by the union not so much in his own interest as in that of the whole class. Once this appeal was made it became a much wider one than merely to continue to subscribe 2*d*. or 3*d*. a week; it became an appeal to join in all efforts for the general emancipation of the manual worker, and particularly of the unskilled labourer, and for a change amounting to revolution in the conditions concerning the distribution of wealth. Hence the so-called new unionism of 1889 and the following years, born as it was to a considerable extent out of Socialism, carried forward the Socialist propaganda in the general trade-union movement to such a considerable extent that the Trades Union Congress of 1891 declared in favour of the Socialist formula—the nationalisation of all the means of production.

Municipal Influence

The fact that local government had been reorganised for London and for the country outside the corporate towns by the County Council Act of 1888, and the fact that local authorities are very large employers of unskilled labour, caused the new unionism to seek a further triumph in the influencing of local administration. Already, in the year 1888, Mrs. Besant and the Rev. Stewart Headlam succeeded in carrying on the London School Board a motion that only firms paying fair wages should be allowed to tender for School Board contracts. The same principle was adopted, after public debate, by the London County Council, and afterwards strengthened so as to exclude from municipal contracts firms which did not pay trade-union

wages and observe trade-union conditions. The movement thus initiated spread from town to town, and has advanced in London, where many of the Metropolitan Borough Councils have bound themselves to give a minimum wage of 30*s*. for a week of forty-eight hours. To a certain extent the national Government has come into line. Resolutions of the House of Commons have laid down the principle that the Government must be a model employer, though there is considerable unwillingness on the part of the executive departments to pay any higher wages than the conditions of the labour market compel.

Reaction against Trade Unionism

The great success of trade unionism in 1889 and 1890, when it seemed to win these triumphs not only through the rising spirit of solidarity among artisans and labourers, but also through the good will of the other classes of the community, was followed later by a movement of reaction. An aggressive attitude on the part of employers was heralded by a series of articles in the *Times*. The Royal Commission on Labour of 1891 recommended that the privilege or irresponsibility in which the trade unions had been left by the laws of 1871 and 1876, as it was then understood, should be abolished, and that the unions should be made legal corporations, able to sue and liable to be sued both by their own members and by employers with whom they had dealings. The numerous appeals to the responsible heads of the industries of the country to imitate American methods, to speed up their rate of production and to be more zealous in the pursuit of improved appliances, incidentally urged sections of employers to adopt lines of action which brought them into conflict with their workmen.

In 1897 a stubborn conflict broke out between the Amalgamated Society of Engineers with certain minor engineering societies, but without the boilermakers, on the

one hand, and the whole body of engineering employers on the other. A demand made by certain districts of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers for an eight-hours day was met by a demand on the part of the employers for complete freedom in the management of their workshops, a freedom which implied the right to supersede skilled hands by partially skilled labourers when improved machines simplified the work sufficiently to enable this to be done. After a long struggle the engineers were beaten.

The next few years were marked by a series of legal decisions which profoundly modified the interpretation of the law as to picketing, and still more as to the general position of trade unions under the law. The most important of these decisions was the Taff Vale Case, in the final decision of which, in July 1901, the House of Lords declared that trade unions were, as a matter of fact, corporate and responsible bodies; and the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants was made liable for very heavy damages for inducing the employees of the Taff Vale Railway Company to break their contracts in order to come out on strike. These decisions produced the effect which had been apprehended in the 'seventies. The trade unions were paralysed, with the result that in the succeeding ten years of rapidly advancing prices, marked also by two periods of boom, they completely failed to secure increases in monetary rates of wages at all equivalent to the increases in rent and the costs of the necessities of life.

Rise of the Labour Party

The Taff Vale decision had the effect of driving the labour organisations into political action. At the Trades Union Congress of 1902 it was resolved to demand fresh legislation, which should—

(1) Clearly confer upon Trade Unions the rights of voluntary association, enjoyed by them under the

Trades Union Act of 1871, of which they were deprived by the Taff Vale decision in the House of Lords;

(2) Make it practically legal for men to withdraw their labour, other than in breach of contract, and also for Unions to sanction such withdrawal;

(3) Define the law of conspiracy;

(4) Generally define and co-ordinate the laws of Trade Unions and industrial disputes.

The Labour Party, which was then organised by an alliance between Trade Unions and Socialist Societies, returned 29 members at the General Election of 1906. It was successful in forcing the Government to deal with the situation created by the Taff Vale decision by making the law as much as possible what it had been supposed to have been between 1876 and 1897. The development of legal theory, which had caused the judges to modify their ideas as to the ways in which an association of individuals might become a corporation, could not be interfered with. Trade unions were therefore put in the position of being peculiarly privileged corporations, allowed to commit wrongful actions in the prosecution of a trade dispute without thereby becoming liable for damages.

The passing of the Trades Disputes Act, however, did not immediately turn back the efforts of trade unions to the line of industrial action. For a time the eyes of the leaders were fixed upon Parliament, and the Labour Party assisted in the passing of numerous measures intended to advance the well-being of the manual workers, among which the Workmen's Compensation Act was the one which depended for its enactment most upon the pressure of the Labour Party.

The problem, however, which demanded the greatest amount of attention from the Labour Party was that of unemployment, and the most conspicuous contribution of the party to the political history of the time was the drafting of the Right to Work Bill, which would have imposed on

the local authorities the duty of giving subsistence to the unemployed worker and to his family until they could secure for him an offer of employment on fair conditions. Needless to say, the Labour Party's Bill was thrown out by the House of Commons. Efforts were made to deal with the problem on the lines suggested by the experience of Distress Committees under the Unemployed Workmens Act of 1905, by means of Employment Exchanges under the Board of Trade, and the Unemployment Section of the Insurance Act.

Meanwhile, among the masses of the rank and file there was increasing irritation at the failure of the group of Labour Members in Parliament to use their presence and votes in the House of Commons in such a way as to raise wages. The South African War and the Russo-Japanese War had both tended to raise prices; to the astonishment of those who did not follow the increasing output of the gold-mines of the world, and who did not believe or understand the economic theory concerning the purchasing power of money, prices continued to rise when the world was once more at peace. In default of any strong and determined action on the part of the wage-earners themselves, wages remained practically stationary. This was undoubtedly the main cause of the labour unrest of recent years. It showed itself first of all in indifference to the parliamentary proceedings of the Liberal Party, and in criticism of the Labour representatives. Later, it expressed itself in the adoption of new leaders and new ideas.

The Osborne Decision

At the very moment when the rank and file of trade unionists had begun to be to an unreasonable degree disappointed with the results of the parliamentary method, the House of Lords, by the Osborne Judgment in December 1909, destroyed the legal right of trade unions to take parliamentary action at all. The grounds of the decision, as explained by the Law Lords, are very curious. In 1876 it

was held as a matter of general legal theory that a corporation could only be brought into existence by the act of a legal superior. Hence, as the laws of 1871 and 1876 did not make trade unions into corporations, it was supposed that they were free from a corporate character, and were not liable to be sued as corporations. The decision in the Taff Vale case in 1901 rested upon the view that associations of men could become corporate bodies merely by acting as such, and the trade unions, having been in the habit of so acting, had become corporations. But the Osborne Judgment, while accepting the view that trade-unions were, as a matter of fact, corporations, endeavoured to find the explanation of their being such in trade-union law, and fixed upon the defining clause in the Act of 1876, which gave the criteria whereby trade unions could be distinguished from other associations with which that law was not concerned, as determining the limits of their operations. The Law Lords, however learned in their own profession, herein showed themselves ignorant both of the actual nature of trade unions and of trade-union history.

The practical effect of the judgment is to confine trade-unions to the conduct of strikes, and to those activities which can be argued to be subsidiary to that end. At the moment of writing the Osborne Judgment is the last word in the determination of the law with respect to trade-unions, and a legislative measure giving the right to take parliamentary action, and such other steps as may be required to promote labour interests, is at present the aim of the Labour Party in Parliament and the dominating factor in the determination of its policy.

The question continues to be viewed with an extraordinary degree of indifference by the great mass of the members of trade unions. Among these there are, on the one hand, very considerable numbers who cling to the historic parties, and who are found preferring to vote Liberal or Conservative in a contested election rather than for the Labour candidate; while, on the other hand, among those who are strongly opposed to the "capitalist parties,"

there is a strong tendency to desire the creation of an independent party on the basis of political opinion rather than of class, a definitely Socialist party instead of the Labour Party, which dare not definitely commit itself to Socialism for fear that, by so doing, it will accentuate political differences among the members of the unions themselves.

Syndicalism

Meanwhile, the Sheffield Trade Union Congress of 1910, at which the Osborne Judgment was the main official business, was marked also by the unofficial preaching of a doctrine known as Syndicalism, though somewhat different from French Syndicalism. Syndicalism may be regarded from one side as a theory with respect to the right method of organising industry. From this point of view it may be considered a revival of the earliest English Socialism, that of Robert Owen. The doctrine is that the workers in the great groups of industry, *e.g.*, the Textile, Transport, Mining and Metal-working industries, should organise themselves into comprehensive unions in which both skilled and unskilled men should have equal share, and that these unions, originally created to demand better conditions from the private employers in those industries, should ultimately themselves take over the responsibility for the management of the industries. In the forms of Syndicalism current in France and America there appears to be a general tendency to hold that the different industrial unions should be international, and that the different industrial unions over the whole world should agree together as to the terms on which each should do its service to the whole of humanity. In England foreign ideas, if accepted, are generally accepted with a difference; the English Syndicalist appears to be dominated rather by national than international ideals, and the prevailing idea with him appears to be that the industrial unions of the British Isles should combine together to control the working of the national industries.

But much more important than the programme of Syn-

dicalism is its teaching with regard to the immediate method of working-class advance. Here it rests upon a psychological rather than an economic basis. It declares that the tendency of parliamentary action is to divide men, that of industrial action to unite them; that elaborate organisation and accumulated funds are of less importance to trade unions than the spirit of solidarity and of militancy; and that this spirit can best be roused by repeated struggles to obtain improved conditions. Syndicalism criticises severely the existing organisation of trade unionism for its sectionalism, and for the tendency of the skilled artisan to dissociate himself from the unskilled labourer. It also condemns entirely the fundamental policy of trade unionism as it has been worked out since the 'forties, the policy, viz., while demanding from employers as large a share as possible of the disposal surplus of industry, of leaving to the employer a normal rate of profit. The Syndicalist sees no reason for limiting the demand of the labourer at what the employers can concede. If the whole employing class in a given industry is driven into bankruptcy, then it will be all the easier for the organised Syndicalists to take control of that industry, and so to establish a new order of society.

To what extent these views will make headway among British working-men is a question that the future will determine. It did not, however, need much teaching of this character to set a practical movement going, which swept through the country in the hot summer of 1911 with an infectiousness and effectiveness strikingly resembling the experience of the country in 1889. Seamen and Firemen and Dockers took the lead, and great increases of wages were obtained at all the chief ports in the country. The movement spread to the London Carters, who were successful in forcing considerable concessions from their employers, and to the Railway Servants, who declared a general strike on August 17, 1911.

The Railway strike forced the Government to intervene.

Almost by a miracle it was successful in securing a resumption of work, in spite of the fact that the great mass of the members of the trade unions on the one hand, and the directors of the railway companies on the other, were eager for a fight to a finish. How that fight would have resulted if it had taken place it is extremely difficult to calculate. Later in the year the movement spread to the Coal-miners, with whom the sliding scales for several years had been working so as to give reduced wages, in spite of increased food prices. Here, again, Government intervention finally secured resumption of work, though not until the miners had been out for seven weeks. This struggle, again, was followed by the second strike of the London Transport Workers in May, June and July of 1912, in which, perhaps, the most conspicuous feature was the resolution of the employers, headed by the Port of London Authority, to reduce the unions to a condition of helpless submission.

CHAPTER XXII

IMPERIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

The Psychology of Imperialism

It would be a very great mistake to regard the tariff issue as being entirely one of either economic principles or economic interests. The dominating motives of the advocates of the system of Imperial Preference, on the one hand, and of Free Trade on the other, are mainly ethical. The one is an Imperialist, desiring to draw together the component parts of the Empire by common trade interests, which shall turn their exclusive side towards foreign nations. The other desires to promote international co-operation to the utmost in trade, in order to secure international co-operation in the advance of civilisation.

It is difficult to define Imperialism, or to say exactly how and when Imperialism became a vital factor in British public life. A prominent journalist, discussing the psychology of the matter, declared some time ago that he, personally, was animated by a feeling of warm affection to all other subjects of the British Empire, but his sympathies were comparatively cold to those outside. If he correctly analysed his feelings he must have been a psychological monstrosity. It is hardly possible that one's feelings should be radically changed towards a Hottentot or Kaffir, when he crosses the border-line between British and German South Africa. How easily an imperialistic sentiment of this sort is led astray by a little geographical ignorance, is illustrated by the fact that a London organ

of Imperialism some years ago made it a reproach against Mr. Keir Hardie that he was a "Pro-Zulu," forgetting that Zulus are subjects of the Empire, so that every good Imperialist must necessarily be a Pro-Zulu.

Imperialism must therefore, I think, be defined as a realisation of the common responsibilities of the Empire; of the responsibility of each constituent state and colony of the Empire to the whole, of each subject to the Empire. and of the reciprocal responsibility of the Empire to its constituent states and to its four hundred million people. But if this be accepted as a correct definition of true Imperialism, a great deal that passes current must be branded as false.

The sense of common responsibilities has partly grown up through the sense of common interests. It has also partly grown up through a greater consciousness of the mere existence of the Empire, which was created, as has been said, in a fit of absent-mindedness.

The early Empire-builders were narrowly nationalistic. Queen Elizabeth's representatives in Ireland showed no sense of responsibility for the well-being of the native Irish; nor did the British administrators in the eighteenth century consider that prudent statesmanship required any other policy towards the colonies than that of making them serve the economic interests of Englishmen to the greatest possible extent. Among the pioneers of a nobler and broader spirit we may cite Edmund Burke, whose campaign against Warren Hastings was animated by a passionate sympathy for the natives in India; and Lord Durham, whose settlement of Canada practically embodied the policy of seeking the well-being of a colony for its own sake, and entrusting to the colonists the freedom of self-government because they were, after all, best qualified to judge how their interests could be best served.

During the period of the peace which ended in the Crimean War, there was a growing tendency to regard the commercial and manufacturing interests of England as of

supreme importance, and to hold, that as it had been found necessary to abandon the policy of making the colonies subservient to insular commercial interests, it was well also to get rid of responsibility for the self-governing colonies. The most notable practical expression of this attitude was the Sand River Convention in 1851, by which the Orange Free State was created, its inhabitants being compelled against their will to separate themselves from the Empire.

Gradually the commercial conditions altered. The barrier of distance which separates England from Canada, South Africa and Australia has been whittled away by repeated improvements of ocean-going traffic, while the barrier of difference of language which separates us from our close neighbours on the Continent has remained practically undiminished owing to the inadequacy of our educational systems. With the development of steamship lines, of railways, of posts and of telegraphs, emigration within the Empire has been greatly increased; so that almost every family in Great Britain and Ireland can count friends and relatives, more or less distant, in considerable numbers in the colonies.

To these human ties must be added financial ties. British capital finds all sorts of fields for investment; but there is a certain preference to invest within the Empire rather than without it. This is shown by the fact that the total British investments in India and the colonies were estimated by Sir George Paish in the Royal Statistical Society's Journal, September 1909, as being practically equal in absolute amount to the investments in foreign countries; which means that they are several times as great in proportion to area and population. The British colonies naturally look entirely to the London money market for the capital they need, while the states of South America, for example, may apply with equal readiness to France, Germany or Belgium. Similarly a partial uniformity of language and a common standard of weights and measures,

and in some cases of money, tend to make trade easier within the Empire than without it.

Nor must the influence of powerful writers be forgotten. The publication of Professor J. R. Seeley's lectures on the *Expansion of England* in 1883 was followed by an increasing output of works of various character tending to develop the imperialistic spirit, among which Rudyard Kipling's tales and poems have been the most effective.

The South African War

Just as the Sand River Convention of 1851 marked the moment of greatest apathy towards the colonies, so the South African War, which resulted in the annexation of the two Boer Republics, the Transvaal and the Orange River, marked the rising of a sentiment supposed to be imperialistic to fever heat. There are various theories current in different circles as to the real cause of the South African War. Among them may be mentioned—

(1) The theory that the Transvaal was the aggressor, probably being instigated by promptings from the Continent, and by promised continental assistance, which actually did not materialise.

(2) The theory that the British Government was made a catspaw by financiers and mine-owners, and driven forward by popular rancour, which was created by interested persons.

(3) The theory that both Governments blundered into war.

Of these theories the second appears to be the one which is generally held on the continent of Europe, and which is most widely prevalent among thinking men of the working classes in our own country. It is desirable even at this late date that the conduct of the Government in the proceedings which led up to the war should be explained and justified, if it be possible; in order that the nation may be freed from the reproach of what appears to so many people to have been at once a stupendous blunder and a monstrous national crime.

If there is much doubt and controversy as to the real causes of the South African War, there is an equal amount of uncertainty about its consequences. It appears to be the received opinion in England that the war resulted in the creation of a united South Africa under British rule as an integral part of the British Empire, though the way in which such a union of hearts and Governments is supposed to have been effected is a matter of dispute; one party considering it the result of the mutual respect of valiant combatants after the conclusion of a stubborn fight, the other party considering it the result of the grant of self-government to the two annexed states. Personally, I find it difficult to share this optimistic view. An Oxford historian lecturing in the Orange Free State, in one town had to give his lecture in a hall draped in black, with every member of the audience in mourning. He asked the reason of an English lady, and she told him that every child belonging to the town, without exception, had died in the concentration camps. It may be that the Dutch population of South Africa will forgive and forget, but it seems to be asking too much of ordinary human nature to expect it.

Again it may or may not be, so far as the extremely meagre information vouchsafed to the British citizen enables him to judge, that even before the South African War it was the policy of one or more of the continental states to break the British Empire into fragments and to regard South Africa as the heel of Achilles. What is certain is that foreign intervention was actually prevented by the overwhelming strength of the British navy, and that a diplomatic effort to secure an early composition which would have safeguarded the independence of the Boer Republics would have been welcomed throughout the whole of civilised Europe. When the war was over it appeared that Britain had to face a hostile Continent. King Edward VII, who had intervened to secure the withdrawal of the cruel and foolish demand for uncon-

ditional surrender on the part of the Boers, is credited with having initiated a campaign which resulted in the creation of the Anglo-French Entente, followed by the Triple Entente, in which Russia also is included. It is difficult to conceive what would be the international position had this policy not been adopted, or if it had failed. It is clear, however, that it still leaves the position of the Empire very difficult and perplexing.

International Relations

At the moment of writing the naval competition between our country and Germany is a dominating and most sinister feature. The attempt which was made by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman to secure an agreement for the limitation of naval armaments appears to have only aggravated the evil which it was intended to prevent, though it is impossible to regret that the attempt was made. At the present time the policy adopted by responsible statesmen, whether Liberal or Conservative, is that expressed by Lord Haldane in the House of Lords on July 23, 1912—

> "Whatever efforts Germany may make she must reckon upon our making efforts which will be still greater, because sea power is our life, and in sea power we intend to remain superior."

On the other hand, the Labour Party and a section of the Radicals are bitterly opposed to the policy of increased naval estimates, which seem likely to grow in the immediate future to an unparalleled figure.

Here, again, it is eminently desirable that if the Foreign Office can enlighten the British public without exacerbating the international situation it should do so. Whatever may be the inconveniences of an enormous naval expenditure they are trifling compared with the horrors of war between two great empires. It may be that, whether by the South African War or circumstances beyond the control of the

British Government, the British Empire has become an object of hostility to the central European powers. If it is so, the Empire must be prepared to defend itself. But at least we ought to know whether there is no way of disarming such hostility.

The Efficiency of the Empire

Two considerations remain which, in my opinion, have not received sufficient attention. The first is that it is a terrible condemnation of the Government of the Empire that it should feel any difficulty in building ships against the German Empire. At the census of 1911 the population of the British Empire exceeded 416,000,000, whereas that of the German Empire in the same year was estimated at some 80,000,000, roughly one-fifth as many.

We are accustomed to think of the British Empire as consisting mainly of men of the Anglo-Saxon blood, and as being on the whole well governed, highly civilised and wealthy. As a matter of fact the Empire consists mainly of Asiatics; it is more cursed by deep poverty than any other great state, and the great majority of its adult population are unable to read or write. The first and greatest of all the problems of Empire is the problem of India. Among the prominent facts with regard to India which are confessed in the *Statistical Abstract*, are that the average death-rate for the ten years ending 1908 was between thirty-four and thirty-five per thousand, which represents an excess of unnecessary deaths, judging by the standard of a country like Japan, of some four millions per annum. Poverty and ignorance are the obvious causes of this appalling death-rate. The fundamental duty of the Government is to protect the people against devastating plagues and famines; and the obvious means of doing so is to train the most gifted of the native population to lead the people in the fight against the evils that beset them. How little the British Government in India realises this duty may be judged by the statistics of

graduates turned out in the year 1909–10 in different professions; in medicine there were but thirty, in engineering only seventeen, in agriculture not a single one; but in arts there were 2,116 and in law 576.

I have no intention here to throw any aspersion upon the personnel of the Indian Civil Service. My complaint is against the system, and on three grounds—

(1) That the English Civil Servants in India are too few and too much absorbed in the duty of maintaining the Government as it is and in dealing with difficulties like plagues and famine, to have leisure and energy to tackle the great problem of lifting up the whole standard of the material well-being of the natives.

(2) That the ghost of the economic doctrine of *laisser-faire*, and other obsolete ideas which allow only a very restricted scope to the energies of the Government, still cling round our actual practice, so that it is scarcely regarded by Parliament or by the office of the Secretary of State as an urgent matter that the Government should seriously set itself to work to minimise Indian poverty.

(3) That the method of training of our higher Civil Servants is entirely inadequate and unsuitable. Education in the public schools and at Oxford is about the worst possible preparation for training a man to see how to utilise every development of mechanical and biological science, medicine and hygiene, for the benefit of an Asiatic people.

As an immediate palliative it would perhaps be wise for the Indian Government to borrow a few officials from Japan or even from South America; for a comparison between the death-rates of the cities of South America and those of British India is entirely creditable to the former. But for a more permanent remedy it is obvious that we need a revolution in English University education. Wellington said that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton; some future historian may have to write that the Empire was lost in the lecture-rooms of the University of Oxford. To various audiences I have urged

that the first step for the salvation of the Empire must be to abolish compulsory Greek at Oxford and Cambridge and substitute compulsory Geography. Fortunately a Royal Commission, with power to act, for the reform Oxford and Cambridge Universities is among immediate possibilities.

Imperialism a Stage towards Internationalism

The second consideration which I think important and apt to be overlooked, is that while it appears evident that the world is passing out of a stage of nationalism into one of imperialism, and there is a tendency for a larger and larger portion of the earth's surface to come under the control of great empires, yet even this is only a stage towards a further political evolution, towards "The Federation of the World." At the present time it appears to me as though most people were prepared to deny either one proposition or the other, either to refuse to accept imperialism as a necessary stage in human evolution or to look upon it as the last stage with which we need concern ourselves. But both propositions appear to me to be incontrovertible. On the one hand we find that the development of modern industry implies a ransacking of all parts of the world for foods and raw materials, both vegetable, animal and mineral. Rapid development of rubber plantations in tropical countries will no doubt be followed by the development of plantations of many other sorts, utilising the tremendous productive power of tropical heat and rain. The ransacking of the world for gold is now being followed by a similar ransacking for coal, iron ore, tin, petroleum, and the like. The rapid exploitation of the tropics which is now proceeding, may be followed later on by an exploitation of the frigid zones, and Canada, for example, may make greater profit out of farms for fur animals on the shores of her arctic bays and gulfs than out of her forests or corn-fields. All this has its necessary reaction upon the industrial and manufacturing countries. They are driven

to mark out their own fields for future exploitation in countries with scanty or savage populations. The financier, the concessionaire and the trader all push their governments forward in the race of annexation; and engineering, ship-building, gun-making, and armour-producing firms are not slow to urge the necessity of creating formidable armaments in order that the government of a particular state may have the means of negotiating to advantage with rival claimants for any particular stretch of tropical swamp or desert.

It is inevitable that those who have been looking forward to the development of international peace and arbitration and the smoothing out of quarrels through the triumph of international ideals over narrow national ones, should resent this interposition of another preliminary stage in human development before the final triumph of Internationalism. But to my mind they make a mistake if they refuse to recognise the inevitableness of this intervening stage, instead of studying how to get the best of Imperialism while it is with us, and how to pass through it as speedily as may be.

On the other hand, I think it is pretty clear that just as in industry the development of a few huge companies out of many small firms, competing desperately against one another, is only a preliminary stage to their amalgamation in some form of trust, so it is in the case of empires. The greatest empires must inevitably fear one another. "Dreadnought" is an euphemism for "Fear all," and the very development of huge armaments of modern times is a testimony to the nervous dread of mutual collision among the governments of the world. That dread is on the point of being enormously intensified by the development of airships and aeroplanes. The great empires must combine to make war on a large scale impossible, for the consequences otherwise would be too terrible. Meanwhile it should be noted that the very impossibility of a psychological basis for an impassioned Imperialism which

has been referred to above, indicates how readily the transition from Imperialism to Internationalism can be made. It is notable that at the present time the British public is more readily moved by floods in Paris than by famines in India. It is necessary, if the Empire is to last and not be a curse to the countries of which it is constituted, that we should be very much more sensitive to the good and evil fortunes of its outlying portions. But we shall find it psychologically impossible to become more sensitive towards our fellow-subjects without becoming more sensitive to human beings all over the world.

CHAPTER XXIII

STRAINS AND STRESSES IN MODERN ENGLAND

THE most difficult question now remains for our consideration: What is it that has been made in Modern England during the past hundred years? The answer has been given that the history of the last century has been the history of the growth of democracy. In support of this view we may quote the series of Acts of Parliament for political reform, both of central and local government; the practical realisation of the historic demands of the Chartists and their precursors, the development of trade unionism, the rise of co-operation, the building up of our still very imperfect national system of education, and the fact that the amelioration of the conditions of life and work for the mass of the population is the avowed object of all legislative proposals and party programmes. Yet, even politically, democracy is still in actual fact only attained to a very imperfect degree and in a very unsatisfactory form; while industrially and socially it exists only as a feeble beginning.

THE GOVERNMENT OF ENGLAND

In theory the Government of England only needs that the last steps towards Adult Suffrage, with single voting and equal electoral districts, should be taken in order for it to become perfectly democratic. The Representative Chamber is now supreme; the candidates expound their political views to the electors, and the electors select the candidate whose opinions and motives with regard to legislation and administration are most in accord with their

own. The majority in the electorate thus is represented by the majority in the House of Commons, and the leaders of the latter majority form the Cabinet. Each Cabinet Minister is subject to the control of the House of Commons, which can question him as to the conduct of his department, censure him, reduce his salary, and, in the last resort, impeach him. The whole Cabinet is again collectively responsible to the people's representatives. While they thus indirectly control administration, they directly control legislation. And in order that the electors in each constituency may have a perfectly free hand in choosing whom they like as their representative, and when he is chosen may demand his loyal and undivided service, he is paid a salary of £400 a year. That is the theory.

In practice things work out somewhat differently. Instead of the House of Commons controlling the Ministry, it is the Ministry which controls the House of Commons. Instead of members' salaries making them more the servants of their constituents, they tend to bring them more under the control of the Cabinet. To some extent the control of the House of Commons over administration is real, because any Member of Parliament has a certain power of bringing the facts of administration into the light of publicity. But the constitutional methods of exercising control are delusive. The doctrine of collective Cabinet responsibility has destroyed the individual responsibility of heads of departments, since an attack on the administration of, let us say, the Post Office, is treated as an attack on the Government as a whole; and members when in form voting for or against the proposition that the telephone service is badly managed, know that in reality they are voting for or against the resignation of the whole Ministry, or a dissolution of Parliament and the imperilling of their own seats. Nor is any control of the separate departments through the whole Cabinet substituted. Each Cabinet Minister has too heavy a task in supervising his own department, to say nothing of the calls upon him to support

the Government in the House and the country, to look after his own constituency, and to perform innumerable social duties, to be able to spare time, or thought, or energy, for any other department.

From this it would appear that our political system makes each Cabinet Minister the despotic master of his own department, as long as he holds office. But to suppose this really to be the case is to ignore the fact that there are for any given man only a certain fraction of twenty-four working hours in each day. The Minister must work his department through his permanent officials, if he succeeds in working it at all. If his ideas are in harmony with theirs, well and good. The department runs itself pretty much as it would if he were non-existent. If there is a serious divergence of aim, then a contest must ensue, and in the game which has to be played he is an amateur, they are professionals; he has the advantage of being the nominal superior, they have the tradition and routine of the office behind them, and full and accurate knowledge where he is mainly dependent on the information with which they supply him. Hence a Cabinet Minister, instead of being either the absolute master of his own department, or the means whereby the people and their representatives control that department, is, as a rule, rather the means whereby the department gets what it wants out of Parliament and the country, subject to the competing claims of other departments. One is tempted to declare that the true theme of recent political history is the growth of bureaucracy rather than the growth of democracy.

But, after all, the power of making appointments remains with the political heads. This power is real and important where its reality and importance are recognised. It is idle for the Government to make a new legislative departure, unless there already exists, or it creates, the machinery for putting such legislation into force. Thus the art of successful legislation is, to a great extent, the art of finding the right men to carry it out, and of giving them the neces-

sary scope. Old-established Government departments are difficult of control; but a Minister who realises these principles can secure the loyal and enthusiastic co-operation of his subordinates in carrying out a policy which involves the creation of new posts.

Again, with the people remains the ultimate power of appointing Prime Ministers. Even this power is strictly limited, for there is usually a choice only between two candidates. Still, the mere fact that this power exists does impose a compulsion on Governments to endeavour to satisfy the electorate. Prominent politicians are often upbraided for vote-catching. That is the very condition on which the politician is allowed to do his work. He must either give the people what they want, or induce them to want what he gives them.

If, then, in our search for the real possessors of political power in England we find one set of rulers in the permanent officials hidden in Government offices, we find on the whole a more important body in the makers of public opinion. Of these the existing types and grades are almost innumerable. They may use as their tools the pulpit, the press, the platform, the scientific treatise, the novel, the street corner, or the spectacle of actual achievement. Any sort of social advantage possessed by the would-be maker of public opinion can be turned to use. Thus the wealthy man may finance newspapers, create garden suburbs, or endow propagandist organisations; while the leader who rises from the ranks of the people regards a seat in Parliament as a platform which will lift him into greater conspicuousness and enable him to make a wider appeal. But in the end the two things that count most are the intellectual power of gripping and developing constructive ideas, and the emotional power of expressing them with conviction and enthusiasm. Many men desire to make an imprint of their own personality on the page of history; he who is to accomplish this "must give and hazard all he hath."

It is difficult to define what real, as opposed to formal, democracy is. But perhaps this fact, that it is open, though in a very unequal degree, to gifted men of all classes to lead and guide the course of national life, is the greatest element of real democracy to be found in the existing state of the nation.

Democracy does not, I take it, imply the absence of leaders. But it does imply a certain sort of relationship between the leaders and the mass. On the whole our most important leaders are those who lead us by persuasion. To make this relation democratic it is necessary that the persuasion be directed to the intelligence and the higher instincts of the people by means of candid argument and the honest appeal of sincere emotion, and not to their baser passions by the artful use of catchwords, and all manner of exaggeration and cunning suggestion. In other words real democracy can only exist by virtue of the power of discrimination and independent criticism in the mass of the people. For this we need a system of elementary education which makes every child learn to think, to be followed by a definite training in social sciences for the adult. We are still far from this, but it is a well recognised educational ideal.

The Industrial System

In industry, as I have said above, democracy can be found only as a feeble beginning. Instead of the growth of democracy we find, what is perhaps its herald, the growth of discontent. It is worth while to look for the roots of that discontent.

The modern development of industry has been accompanied by a corresponding evolution in the construction of the individual business. As the individual capitalist employer superseded the humble craftsman, so he is being superseded by the joint-stock company of limited liability. And among limited liability companies the tendency of competition is to work itself out, so that only those

companies are secure which possess some monopolistic advantage. But one feature, the craftsman business, the individual capitalist business, and the joint-stock company have in common—the principle that those own and control the business who own its plant and tools. In any sort of business, again, there are three sets of people who have a living interest in its proper management: the owners, the men who devote their labour to it and who live by it, and the people whose wants it exists to supply.

It was necessary, and on the whole just, that in the handicraft stage, the master craftsman should be in complete control of his business, subject to the rules of his craft gild and municipality. His journeymen and apprentices had their concern in his business, but compared with him, they were but feebly interested; they had chiefly in their minds the businesses of which they hoped later to become masters. As for the customers, the master was bound to serve them to their satisfaction. Even when the industrialists were divided into employers and employed, the individual employer was still, commonly, more vitally interested in the prosperity of his business than the men whom he employed, and therefore still had a claim in justice to a predominant voice in its control; and he was still constrained by competition to serve his customers to the utmost of his ability.

But to-day the position is reversed. Take any business of the type now becoming dominant, the joint-stock company which exploits a monopoly: take, for example, the Great Western Railway Company. Of the three classes of people concerned in it, its body of employees, the inhabitants of the districts of England and Wales which are dependent on it for railway facilities, and the shareholders, it is the shareholders, as such, whose lives are least concerned in the company, but it is they who own it. The salaried managers are paid to get the utmost labour at a small rate of pay that can safely be demanded from the workers; and to extract as much as possible in fares

and charges from the travelling and trading public at the lowest possible cost, in order to pay the highest possible dividends. In other words the whole structure of a business of the modern type is built up upon a foundation of injustice.

Again, it was once approximately true that the values of commodities were determined by the costs of production. The only exception, the Physiocrats noted, was where Nature worked with man. Modern science is yoking, ever more and more effectually, the forces of Nature to the service of human industry, the surplus of produce over the cost of production grows enormously; and, as business tends towards monopoly, the surplus is retained, more and more, in the hands of the owners of businesses, instead of being passed on to the consumers by the stress of competition. Thus, just in proportion as the modern type of business drives out earlier types, society tends to consist of bond- and share-holders, with their dependants, on the one side, workers, with theirs, on the other, with a connecting body of salaried managers, whose business it is to control the workers in the interests of the shareholders. True, individual workers may also be shareholders; but there are certain ugly modern developments in industrial finance which tend to fleece the small shareholders, and to make the little accumulations of capital run into the big ones.

But while the ownership of industry is being thus more and more vested in the shareholding class, and the revenues derived from such ownership are becoming at once greater, and more unequally divided, the shareholding class itself is becoming less and less able to discharge the duties and responsibilities attaching to ownership. It is a commonplace of investment, "Don't put all your eggs into one basket." So much in Home Rails, so much in Kaffirs, in Rubber, in Oil; investments in India, in the Colonies, in North and South America, is the prudent policy, which reduces anxiety to a minimum; but which also reduces the

shareholder himself to a mere parasite on the businesses which he, with his fellows, owns.

No wonder there is revolt in the hearts of the workers in all the advanced industrial countries, rising hot and fervid just in proportion to the extent of industrial advance, and to the perfection in the art of modern business management which has been attained. What is, however, most significant in our own country at this actual moment is the practical confession by the leaders of the Conservative Party, in their advocacy of Copartnership, of the fundamental injustice I have here analysed, and the necessity of reform. To put industry on a new basis, on a basis fundamentally just, instead of one fundamentally unjust, is a task of enormous magnitude, but nothing less is demanded of the twentieth century.

There are obviously two possible alternatives to the present system of ownership of industries by shareholders. One is ownership by the workers in the industry; the other is ownership by the people whose wants the industry supplies. Trade unionism is a slight approximation to the former. By trade-union organisation the workers can extort from the shareholders some share in the industrial surplus, some addition in wage to the bare cost price of their labour. Producers' co-operation, "the self-governing workshop," is an effort to establish this system on tentative and voluntary lines; Syndicalism is the aspiration towards its establishment as the world system of industry by revolutions carried out by general strikes. On the other hand, the principle of the control of an industry by those whose wants it supplies is experimentally carried out in co-operative societies on the Rochdale plan, headed by the English Wholesale Society, which in Great Britain alone did together a business of £116,000,000 in 1911; it is the principle of our municipal gas, water, electricity, tramway, highway, sanitary and other services; and of our national army, navy, post office, and educational services. It is the principle of Socialism. That these two principles

may be blended, is indicated by the proposals of the Insurance Act. In so far as it contemplates the organisation of medical service under the control of local committees, representing the insured men and women, it is Socialistic; in so far as it leaves the control of the industry of medical aid in the hands of the medical men and their organisations, it is Syndicalistic.

But just as when individualistic capitalist industry began to dominate the industrial field, it did not eliminate the peasant and craftsmen; so the monopolistic joint-stock company, which is becoming dominant, is not likely to eliminate entirely the earlier types of business. In fact the most primitive type of business, the man who works as his own master, employing no assistant outside his own family, may be found in vast numbers and in many varieties of industry, from the seller of penny toys on Ludgate Hill to the fashionable Harley Street physician. So historical analogy would not lead us to expect that the new form of industrial organisation which may become dominant in the future, in response to the demand for industrial justice, whether Socialist or Syndicalist, will eliminate the earlier types.

Feminism

Even more important than the transformation which is taking place in the character of the unit of industry, the business, is the more gradual change which is taking place in the unit of biological and social life, the family. It is difficult to grasp the fact that up to 1858 the only method whereby divorce could be obtained was that described by Mr. Justice Maule to a deserted husband who committed bigamy, having no one to look after his children: "Prisoner at the bar, you should have sued the adulterer at the assizes, and recovered a verdict against him, then taken proceedings by your proctor in the Ecclesiastical Courts. After successful termination you should have applied to Parliament for a Divorce Act, and your counsel

and your witnesses would have been heard at the Bar of the House." When the prisoner pleaded that he was a poor man, the judge replied with the crushing retort, "It is the glory of the law of England that it knows no distinction between rich and poor."

So far as the law could determine the matter the family was patriarchal. Marriage could only be terminated by death or by Act of Parliament, which have the property in common of over-riding all laws; wives, except by certain legal evasions, could hold no property, but everything that they earned or inherited belonged to their husbands; children could hardly claim any rights against their fathers. In reality the feminist movement, which had slowly gathered force for a hundred years, was undermining patriarchalism, transforming the relationships between men and women, and, in combination with other forces, altering the ideas and habits of the people with regard to the very fundamentals of life.

The aim of feminism is sex equality. It demands in the first place equality in educational opportunities. It was fortunate for the cause of feminism that our system of elementary education had a religious origin, and the Church of England and dissenting sects equally believed in the possession by girls of souls to be saved, so that even from the days of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, schools for girls were established side by side with those for boys. In the second half of the nineteenth century the movement for creating High Schools revolutionised the education of the middle-class girl, and led to the establishment of numerous women's colleges.

The opening of these higher educational opportunities to women has given feminism a cutting edge, and has also stimulated its other demands. The girl who has proved her intellectual fitness demands free entrance to the intellectual professions. To a great extent this demand has been successful. The greatest fight of all was over the entry to the medical profession, and was won only after a

struggle lasting for eighteen years. The prejudice against women doctors still persists. We have as yet no women solicitors or barristers; scarcely any women ministers of religion. But journalism, teaching, painting, sculpture, music, the stage, and teaching give women opportunities approximately equal to those of men. Into the disputed question as to how far women are penalised for their sex in the amount of their remuneration, it is impossible to enter here.

Side by side with the demand for equal opportunities in work, is that for equal opportunities in play. The time is not so long past when the unfortunate inmates of girls' schools were provided with no more exciting forms of physical recreation than an ordered march in the afternoon, two and two, with the governess in the rear. Croquet came to the rescue, followed by lawn tennis. Now hockey, golf, cycling, swimming, motoring, and even aviation have their female devotees in goodly numbers; and the best women in many forms of athletics can hold their own with all except the men in the first-class. To what extent it is wise for women to aim at such excellence in any strenuous form of athleticism is another disputed question which I must here pass by.

But perhaps it may be said that the wisest and soundest form of feminism is the demand that the work which is characteristically women's should receive full recognition of its true importance, both in remuneration and in status. When women began to desert their homes for paid occupations, a sudden discovery was made that the work of household management, of the care of husbands and the bringing up of babies, hitherto despised because feminine, was really, after all, of inestimable importance. But to this day the respectable poor widow with three or four children is usually driven by a Board of Guardians into the factory, and compelled to neglect her children, instead of being required to give them all her time and enabled to do so.

The demand for the vote, for an equal share in the powers and responsibilities of citizenship, is made with a special vehemence. For this there are many reasons. One is that the suffrage is a symbol. For the nation to give the vote to men of all classes and to deny it to women of any class is to declare women to be both inferior in natural powers and inferior in social importance. No pleading by the anti-suffragist that he holds women to be different, but not inferior, can evade this inference. The greater the difference, if there be no inferiority, the more important it is that the different, but equally authoritative, points of view should be given equally the power of political expression. The State is equally concerned with men and women; its business is no longer the extension of territory, but chiefly the securing of a better environment for the coming generation; and the exclusion of women from a share in that business can only be defended on the ground of their intellectual inferiority.

The other reason why the vote is so vehemently demanded is that those who so demand it believe in its overwhelming importance. They believe that while in the past economic and social changes have taken place along the lines of economic and social evolution, mainly under pressure of uncontrolled economic and social forces, in future the collective thought and will of the voters, as expressed by Acts of Parliament, will control both economic and social conditions. The vote, they hold, is a step towards equal pay for equal work; to equal conditions for divorce; to a change in the laws and in their administration which would punish criminal assaults on girls as severely as embezzlement and make the business of the "white slave trader" as perilous as burglary. Behind this there is the hope of an equal standard of sexual morality for men and women.

Births and Deaths

The development of the feminist movement is closely connected with those alterations of habits of thought and conduct which have for the last thirty-six years caused both birth-rates and death-rates to fall in a remarkable degree. Death-rates began to fall much earlier than birth-rates. Thus we have, for three significant years, 1849 being a year of higher death-rate than has been known since, and 1876 the year of highest birth-rate on record—

ENGLAND AND WALES

Year	Birth-rate	Death-rate
1849	32·9	25·1
1876	36·7	21·0
1911	24·4	14·6

A little further light is obtainable from the actual numbers of births and deaths. The number of births in England first exceeded 600,000 in 1851; they passed 700,000 eleven years later, in 1862; ten years afterwards, in 1872, they passed 800,000; in twelve years, 1884, 900,000 was reached. But instead of 1,000,000 being reached in ten or twelve years from then, the total number of births has never reached 950,000, and in 1910 and 1911 fell back below 900,000. The number of births in 1911, 881,241, was smaller than in any previous year since 1890. The total number of deaths, on the other hand, reached 500,000 in 1866, but never reached 600,000, and again fell below the half-million in 1910, though rising above that number in 1911.

This avoidance of both birth and death is evidence of a profound change in national conduct. The diminished death-rate is easily accounted for by the increase of knowledge of hygiene, medicine and surgery, and of the better application of existing knowledge. The falling birth-rate

is a more complicated matter. Increased knowledge is obviously one factor; a greater tendency to act by calculation instead of by instinct another; increased luxury and love of luxury operates in some classes, increased nervousness with regard to the future with others. There is much controversy whether physiological causes are operating to any marked degree, the general opinion being to the contrary. But it is probable enough that our more urbanised generation of parents has more sensitive nerves than its predecessors, and suffers more from the strain of managing young children. Nor can the significance of the growing inability of mothers to suckle their children be overlooked. A general practitioner, arguing to me that civilised humanity is entering upon a phase of increasing sterility, summed up his belief thus: "First, women cease to want to have children, then they cannot suckle them. In the third stage they will be unable to bear children."

But whatever the causes, it is clear that the progressive decline of the birth-rate, if unchecked, must soon produce a declining population, for the death-rate cannot be much further reduced. In fact, it can only be kept down to such a low figure as fourteen per thousand by a continual improvement in the conditions of health. What is true of England and Wales in this respect is also true of the British Isles as a whole, and of the self-governing colonies; a fact of cardinal importance for an empire of huge extent, and, on the whole, very thinly populated. Looking abroad we find the tendency towards sterility prevalent over Western Europe generally, France preceding and Germany following England in the progress towards a stationary population; and equally prevalent in the United States, while the south and east of Europe appear as yet to be unaffected. It is clear that this vital change will profoundly modify international relationships; but in what manner?

Still clearer is it that all domestic policy must be just as powerfully influenced for many years to come, by the

clearly marked tendency of births to diminish to an undesirable and dangerous degree, as it has been, and still is, by the Malthusian theory that population tends to outstrip subsistence. The question of quality of births again, is even more important than that of quantity. The Eugenics Conference in 1912 attracted more public attention than any before; and the demand is becoming urgent for clear thinking and authoritative teaching, both with regard to individual conduct and State policy.

The Children's Movement

Already we have gained something from the falling birth-rate, in the growing tendency to regard the children who are born as a precious national asset. By the children's movement I mean the movement for the study of children and the laws of their development in body and mind; and the related movement to safeguard the welfare of children by all sorts of collective action. Perhaps the most important of all the British series of Education Acts was that passed in 1907, almost unnoticed, which compelled the medical examination of school children and authorised school clinics. It was immediately preceded by the addition of organised games to the school code, and by provisions for school feeding; it was followed by the passing of the Children's Act, which codifies the rights of children against their parents. The extent and activity of voluntary associations on behalf of children grows continually; and a new feature of great possibilities is the growing tendency of municipal authorities and voluntary workers to co-operate on behalf of the children.

The elementary school is the basis of most of these activities. But already the necessity of looking before and after is being recognised. Health visitors, municipal milk dépôts, and Children's Welcome Clubs are efforts to come to the help of infants, before and soon after birth; and the maternity benefit provided by the Insurance Act is one of the features of that much-abused measure which critics

abstain from condemning. At the other end of school life, the problem of the adolescent is one that is exciting earnest thought. We have boys' clubs, girls' clubs, the Boy Scout movement, the agitation for universal military training, besides many older movements to bring religious influence to bear at the most critical stage in human life.

Those who are most active in this movement of sentiment and action appear to be little interested in its relation to the current of scientific thought. The original influence of the Darwinian theory of evolution through the struggle for existence on current social thinking was pernicious. We have suffered much from a tendency to confuse the biological struggle for existence with the struggle to get on, as though plentiful grandchildren were the same thing as wealth and title. In consequence the evolutionary doctrine has been foolishly regarded as a sanction to social inequalities. But this phase is passing.

At the present time the world is waiting for a further elucidation of the laws of heredity, from which reliable sociological inferences can be drawn. Meanwhile modern biological science offers us two sociological doctrines which must remain unaffected by the results of investigations into Mendelism or the Mutation hypothesis. The first is that life is a more important thing than wealth, and that true national success consists in breeding an ever finer race of human beings; the second, that the life of any one generation is chiefly important as a necessary link between the innumerable generations which have gone before, and those which are to come, that the possibilities for future generations are infinite, and the true humanity yet to be evolved may be as far above us in spiritual endowment as we are above the Pithecanthropus erectus.

Meanwhile psychology, one of the youngest of the sciences, having gained a tremendous impetus from the progress of biology, is grappling with the investigation of the growth of character and will and the mental develop-

ment of children. On this basis will arise a real science of education, so that where the educator of to-day gropes about blindly, his successor will have clear light.

The making and remaking of England, the fashioning and refashioning of the conditions of life, instead of ceasing, proceeds at an ever-increasing speed. Change follows change with something like constant acceleration. Each industrial invention stimulates the inventor; each political change provokes further demands for change and facilitates their accomplishment. But the most significant of all the changes now proceeding is the rise of the scientific study of Humanity, in its threefold stages of Biology, Psychology, and Sociology.

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

YEAR.	
1793.	War declared against French Republic. *Feb.* 11.
1800.	Act of Union of Great Britain and Ireland passed. *July.*
1802.	Treaty of Amiens. *March.*
1803.	French War renewed. *May.*
1807.	Abolition of the Slave Trade.
1812.	War with the United States of America.
1814.	First Peace of Paris. Napoleon exiled to Elba. *April.*
1815.	Corn Law passed forbidding importation of wheat when price is below 80*s.* per quarter.
	Battle of Waterloo. *June* 18.
	Second Peace of Paris. *Nov.*
1816.	Cobbett's Political Register issued at 2*d.* *Aug.* 50,000 sold weekly by end of year.
1817.	Suspension of Habeas Corpus.
	March of the Blanketeers.
	Derbyshire Insurrection.
1819.	The "Peterloo Massacre." *Aug.*
	The "Six Acts."
1820.	Death of George III. Accession of George IV. Bill of Pains and Penalties.
1821.	Grampound disfranchised.
1822.	Suicide of Lord Londonderry. Canning becomes Foreign Secretary.
1823.	Robinson becomes Chancellor of the Exchequer and Huskisson President of the Board of Trade.
	Freedom of South American Republics recognised.
	Catholic Association formed.
1824.	Laws forbidding labour combinations repealed.

YEAR.

1824. Robinson's and Huskisson's Tariff reductions and reforms.

1825. Modified liberty allowed to Trade Unions.
Panic and commercial crash.

1827. Canning becomes Prime Minister. *April.* Dies *Aug.* Battle of Navarino. *Oct.*

1828. Duke of Wellington becomes Prime Minister.
New Corn Law with sliding scale of duties.
O'Connell elected for County Clare.

1829. Catholic Relief passed.

1830. Death of George IV. Accession of William IV.
Opening of Liverpool and Manchester Railway. Death of Huskisson.
Duke of Wellington resigns. *Nov.* Earl Grey becomes Prime Minister.

1831. First Reform Bill passes second reading by 302 to 301. *March* 21.
Parliament dissolved. *April* 22.
Second Reform Bill carried by 367 to 231. *June.*
Rejected by House of Lords. *Oct.* 8.
Nottingham Castle burnt down. Bristol riots.
Third Reform Bill passes second reading. Majority 162.
Cholera, first visit.

1832. Motion in Committee adverse to Bill carried in Lords. *May* 7.
Duke of Wellington fails to form a ministry.
Reform Bill passes. *June.*

1833. Quakers and Moravians allowed to substitute affirmation for oath on entering House of Commons.
Emancipation of Slaves. *Aug.*
First effective Factory Act passes.
First grant for Elementary Education.
Rise of National Trade Unions of wide scope.

1834. Poor Law Amendment Act.
Dorsetshire Labourers and "Day of the Trades."

1835. Municipal Reform Act.

1837. Death of William IV. Accession of Victoria.

1838. Lord Durham Governor-General of Canada. New Colonial system inaugurated.

YEAR.

1838. Charter agreed upon and adopted by Chartists.
Sirius and *Great Western* cross Atlantic under steam.
Manchester Anti-Corn Law Association formed.
1839. Penny Postage.
Committee of Privy Council for Education.
Chartist insurrection in South Wales.
1840. Railway Regulation Act.
1841. Sir Robert Peel becomes Prime Minister.
1842. Peel's revision of the Tariff and revival of Income Tax.
1844. The Rochdale Pioneers.
Royal Commission on Health of Towns.
Cheap Trains Act.
1845. Failure of potato crop and famine in Ireland.
1846. Repeal of Corn Laws.
1847. £10,000,000 granted for famine relief.
Ten Hours Bill passed.
1848. Presentation of Chartist petition.
General Board of Health established. Cholera, second visit.
1849. Irish Encumbered Estates Act.
1851. Crystal Palace Exhibition.
Sand River Convention.
1852. Cholera, third visit.
1854. Crimean War begins. *Feb.*
1855. Metropolis Management Act. Creation of Metropolitan Board of Works.
1856. Peace signed at Paris. *March.*
1857. Indian Mutiny.
1858. Government of East India Company abolished, to give place to Crown Government.
1859. Franco-Austrian War.
1860. Garibaldi's campaign in Sicily and Naples.
1861. Victor Emmanuel proclaimed King of Italy.
Transvaal State formed.
American Civil War begins. Cotton famine in Lancashire.
1863. Co-operative Wholesale Society formed.
1865. American Civil War ends. Assassination of Lincoln.
War between Denmark and Prussia.

YEAR.

1866. War between Austria and Prussia.
Reform demonstration in Hyde Park.
1867. Second Reform Act. Household franchise in Boroughs.
Royal Commission on Trade Unions.
Creation of Metropolitan Poor Fund and Asylums Board.
1868. Gladstone becomes Prime Minister.
1869. Co-operative Union formed.
Disestablishment of Irish Church.
1870. Irish Land Act.
Elementary Education Act establishing School Boards.
Competitive Examination adopted for Civil Service.
Franco-Russian War begins. *July.*
1871. Dissenters admitted to Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.
Purchase of Commissions in Army abolished.
Peace signed between France and Prussia. German Empire created.
Local Government Board established.
1872. Ballot Act.
1874. General Election. Disraeli becomes Prime Minister.
Home Rule Party formed.
1875. Public Health Act.
England purchases Suez Canal Shares.
1876. Trade Union Act.
1877. Transvaal annexed.
Russo-Turkish War.
1878. Treaty of Berlin.
1879. Failure of Harvest and severe commercial distress.
1880. General Election. Gladstone becomes Prime Minister.
Transvaal War.
1881. Majuba Hill.
Irish Land Act—"the three F's."
1884. Formation of Imperial Federation League.
1885. Third Reform Act. Household franchise in counties.
General Election. Gladstone's third ministry.
1886. Home Rule Bill defeated in second reading in Commons.
General Election. Lord Salisbury becomes Prime Minister.
1888. County and District Councils established.

YEAR.

1889. London Dock Strike.
1890. Housing Act.
1891. Congested Districts Board for Ireland established.
1892. General Election. Gladstone again Prime Minister.
1893. Second Home Rule Bill rejected in Lords.
1894. Parish Councils Act, also democratising Boards of Guardians.
1895. General Election. Lord Salisbury again Prime Minister.
1897. Employers' Liability Act.
1899. London Government Act, creating Borough Councils.
Irish Board of Agriculture and Technical Education.
Transvaal War begins. *Oct.*
1900. Labour Representation Committee formed.
1902. Education Act, transferring Education to County Councils.
1903. Irish Land Purchase Act.
1906. General Election. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman Prime Minister.
1907. Small Holdings Act.
1908. Old Age Pensions.
1909. Lloyd George Budget.
1910. General Elections. *Jan.* and *Dec.*
1911. Parliament Act, limiting Veto of House of Lords.

APPENDIX

DIAGRAM I. PRICES OF BRITISH WHEAT

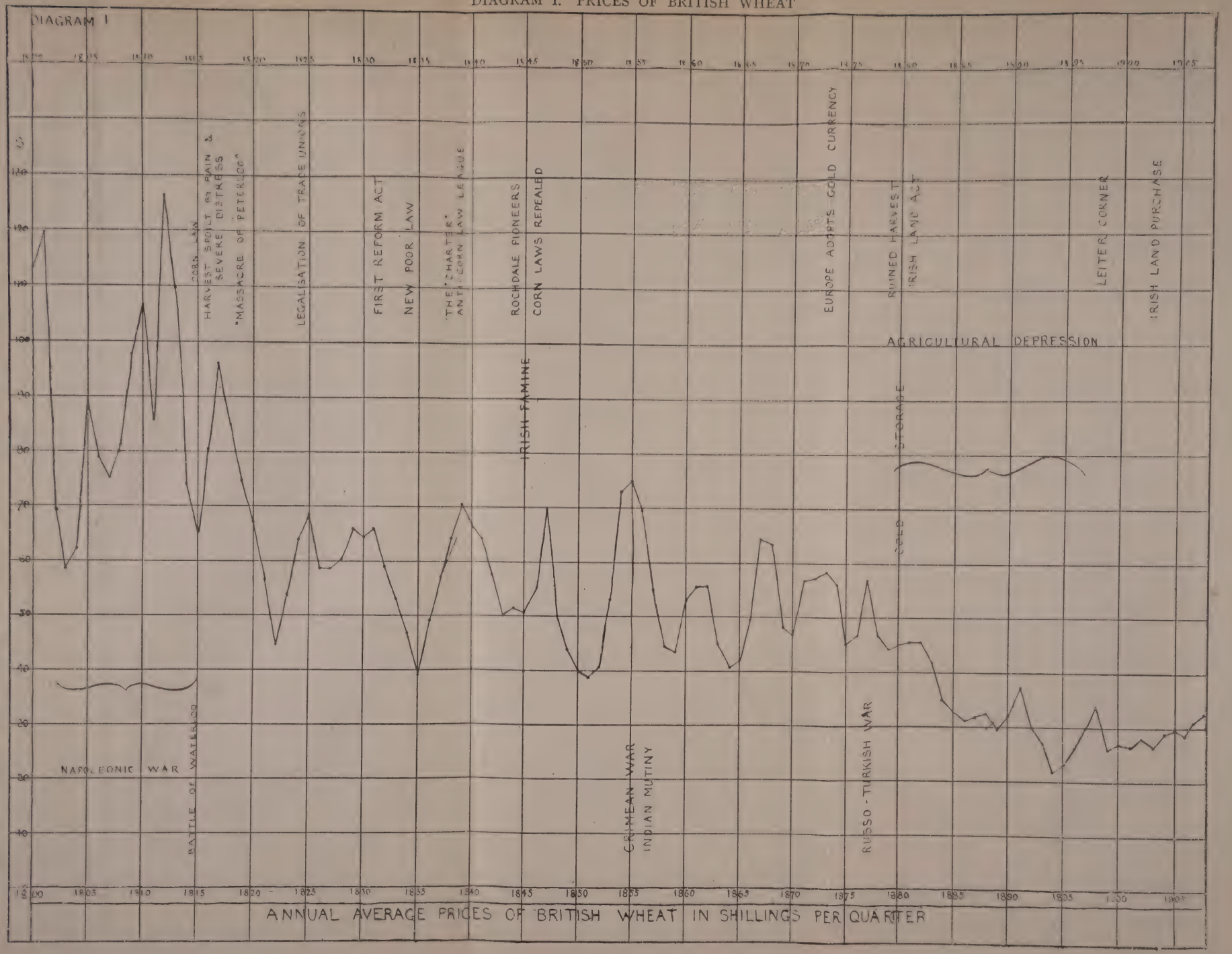


DIAGRAM II. WORLD'S GOLD PRODUCTION AND AVERAGE PRICES OF COMMODITIES

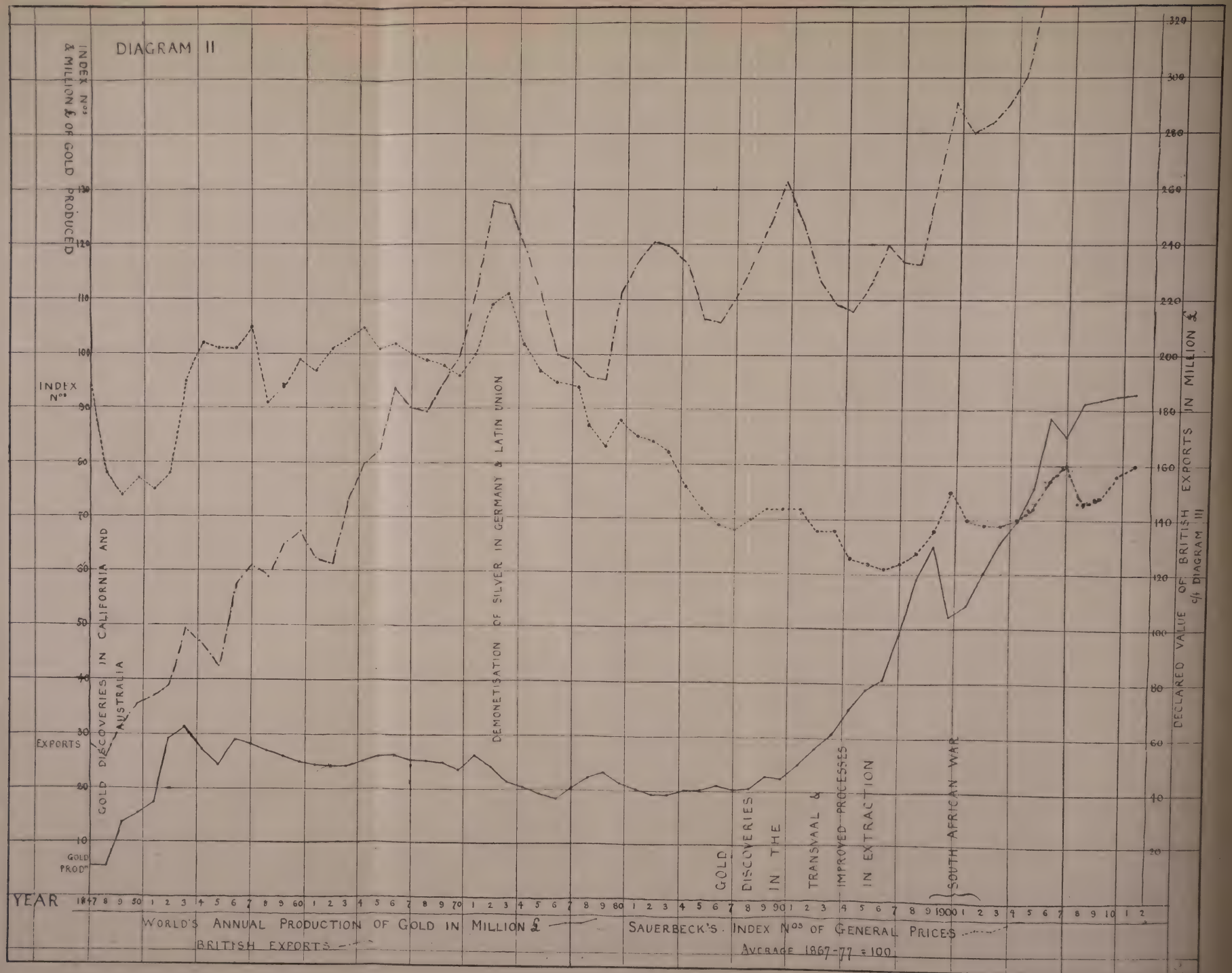


DIAGRAM II
INDEX Nos & MILLION £ OF GOLD PRODUCED
INDEX Nos
EXPORTS
GOLD PRODn
DECLARED VALUE OF BRITISH EXPORTS IN MILLION £
c/f DIAGRAM III
GOLD DISCOVERIES IN CALIFORNIA AND AUSTRALIA
DEMONETISATION OF SILVER IN GERMANY & LATIN UNION
GOLD DISCOVERIES IN THE TRANSVAAL & IMPROVED PROCESSES IN EXTRACTION
SOUTH AFRICAN WAR
YEAR
WORLD'S ANNUAL PRODUCTION OF GOLD IN MILLION £
BRITISH EXPORTS
SAUERBECK'S INDEX Nos OF GENERAL PRICES
AVERAGE 1867-77 = 100

DIAGRAM III. TRUE COURSE OF BRITISH FOREIGN TRADE

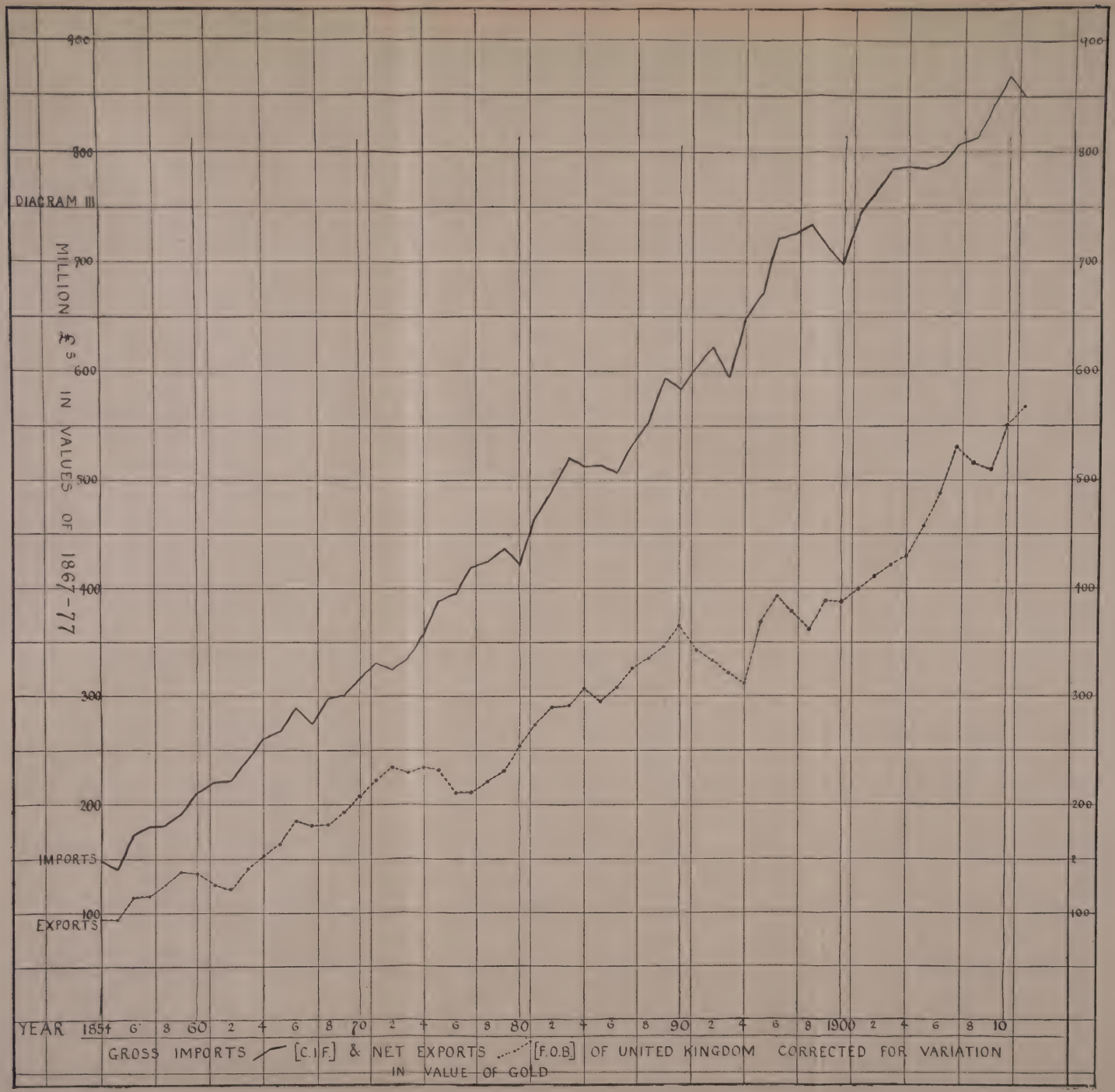


DIAGRAM III
MILLION £'s IN VALUES OF 1867-77
900
800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
IMPORTS
EXPORTS
YEAR 1854 6 8 60 2 4 6 8 70 2 4 6 8 80 2 4 6 8 90 2 4 6 8 1900 2 4 6 8 10
GROSS IMPORTS [C.I.F.] & NET EXPORTS [F.O.B.] OF UNITED KINGDOM CORRECTED FOR VARIATION IN VALUE OF GOLD

DIAGRAM IV. BIRTHS AND DEATHS OF ENGLAND AND WALES

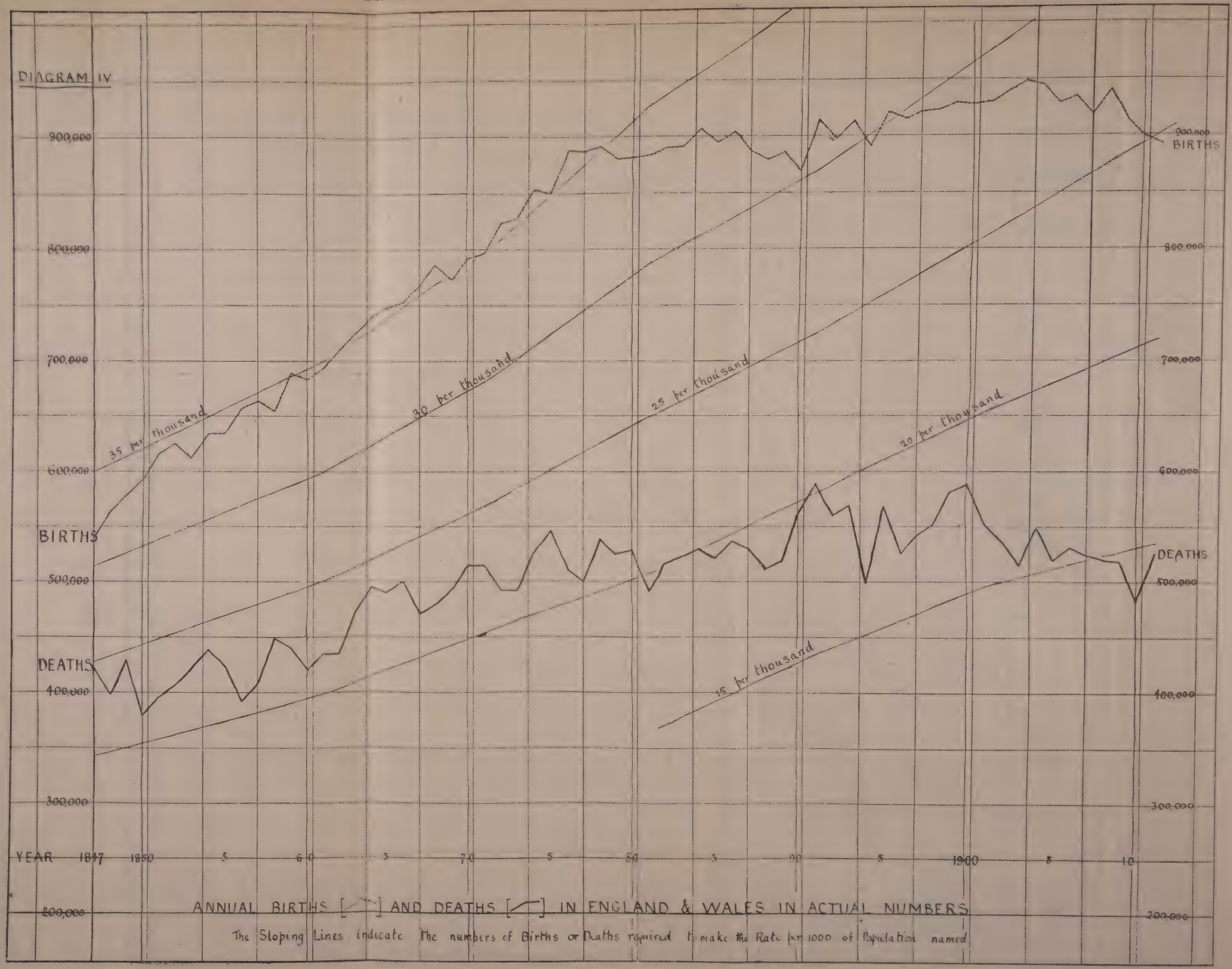


DIAGRAM IV
900,000
800,000
700,000
600,000
500,000
400,000
300,000
200,000
BIRTHS
DEATHS
35 per thousand
30 per thousand
25 per thousand
20 per thousand
15 per thousand
YEAR 1847 1850 5 60 5 70 5 80 5 90 5 1900 5 10
ANNUAL BIRTHS [ ] AND DEATHS [ ] IN ENGLAND & WALES IN ACTUAL NUMBERS
The Sloping Lines indicate the numbers of Births or Deaths required to make the Rate per 1000 of Population named

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